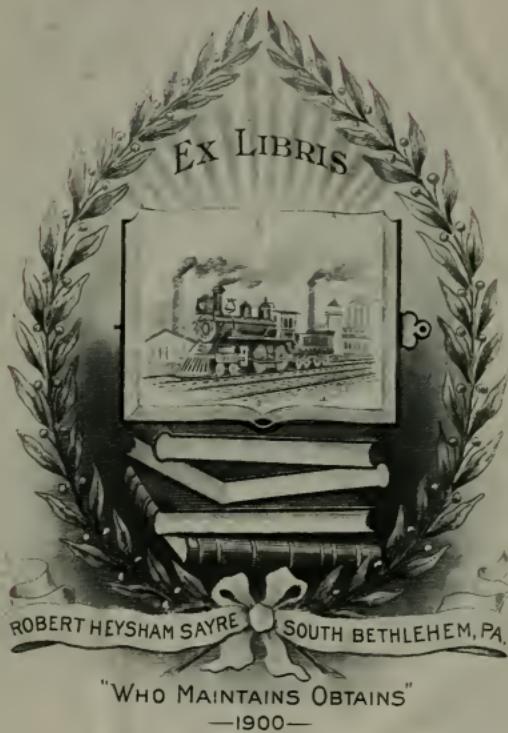


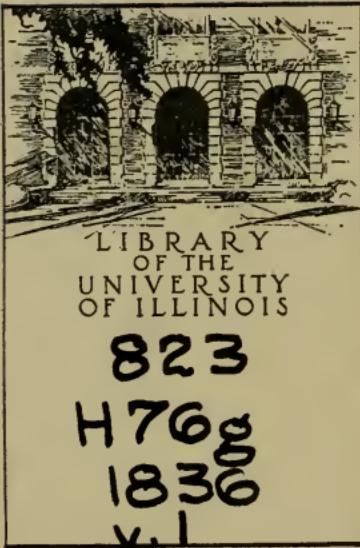
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E Hook, Theodore Edwards

GILBERT GURNEY.

BY THE

AUTHOR OF "SAYINGS AND DOINGS,"
"LOVE AND PRIDE,"

ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

SEVERAL of the following chapters have already appeared in print. Two of the incidents contained in them have been dramatized; one on the French, and the other on the English stage.

This circumstance, which has been noticed by one of the ablest and most impartial of our periodicals (the *Athenæum*), has arisen from the fact of the Editor's having, in society, frequently described the events which actually occurred many years since. He does not, however, think this a sufficient reason for omitting them in his bundle of gleanings from the late lamented Mr. Gurney's papers, in which they stand *originally* recorded.

GILBERT GURNEY.

CHAPTER I.

WHEN I resolved upon committing to paper sundry passages of my life, I determined most carefully to abstain from the perpetration of a piece of *autobiography*—not because the public has been somewhat surfeited with that kind of literature; since, if I have my will, *my* memoranda of the scenes and circumstances which I have witnessed, and which have occurred to me, will never meet the public eye—but because, for the most part, “Reminiscences,” and “Lives and Times,” and the like, are extremely tiresome to read, seeing that the matters and events

incidents and occurrences, which are, or were at the time at which they were set down, all of great importance to the recording individual, have (as all those books savour sadly of senility) lost all interest for the reader, long before they reach his eye.

Nevertheless and notwithstanding, such is the force of habit, and such the dominion of principle, that, for the life of me, I cannot prevail upon myself to leave my notes huddled together without something like arrangement, nor without just so much notice of myself and my family as may serve to account for my curious wanderings over the face of the earth, and for many of the transactions in which I have been doomed to bear a principal part.

Begin we, therefore, with the beginning. "A fig for your dates," says the Smyrna man to the Tunisian. Nevertheless, in this place, dates are really essential, as marking the progress of the writer through his chequered career. Be patient, reader, whomsoever thou mayst chance to be, and I will be brief.

I was born in the same year, and in the same month of the same year, as Lord Byron—but eight days later—on the 30th of January—a memorable day, too. I always felt a sort of sympathetic self-satisfaction as Byron advanced in age and reputation, in the recollection that—although, with my inherent respect for his rank and talents, I could not possibly take the liberty of coming into the world before him—I began my life so nearly about the same period.

There was, nevertheless, something very disheartening to me in the sombre seriousness of my *jour de fête*. I would rather have been born on the anniversary of a victory or a coronation. Let me be ever so good a boy, I could enjoy no holiday on my birth-day—never could be taken to a play—seeing that the theatres were all closed; and moreover, and above this, I lost twelve thousand pounds which my godfather, the late Sir Charles Smith, *would have left me*, if I had been christened after him, as he had proposed, and my parents had intended: but, happening to be born upon the anniversary of

the martyrdom of our too conceding king, my sire, somewhat superstitious, would not hear of my bearing the same name as the unfortunate monarch ;—so I was christened Gilbert, and lost my legacy, Sir Charles having taken huff at my not being named after him, as our old friend Pepys did at Mrs. Brown's, where he and Sir William Penn were godfathers, and Mrs. Jordan and Shipman godmothers to her boy—that being the king's birth-day, upon which Pepys rose early and put six spoons and a silver porringer *into his pocket to give away*; but in the sequel did give the midwife ten shillings, and the nurse five shillings, and the maid of the house two shillings ;—“ yet forasmuch as he expected to give his name to the child, but did not, (it being called John,) he forbore, then, to give his plate.” Thus, by similar mishaps, did *Gilbert Gurney* lose twelve thousand pounds, and *John Browne* a porringer and six spoons.

The saying goes that it is “ a wise child who knows his own father.” For myself it is a disparagement neither to my own personal

wisdom nor to my mother's unquestionable character, to admit that I knew very little of mine. A faint vision of a large red face, a white head, a black tail, and a brown walking-stick, floats in my mind, the possessor of which I was taught in infancy to respect as my parent. He died, however, before I was three years old, in the house in which he had lived for upwards of twenty years, and in which I was born; it stood in Bolsover-street, Cavendish-square,—a street which no longer exists, thanks to the extraordinary improvements which have taken place in that part of the metropolis; it having, several years since, subsided into a chaos of old materials, whence has arisen one of the most magnificent promenades in Europe. Like the Dragon's teeth, the buried bricks of former houses have given birth to a legion of palaces.

I remember our particular house perfectly; the front parlour had two windows looking to the street, over the blinds of which I recollect my father had a strange propensity for looking out at the passengers; and so earnestly did he

indulge in the pursuit, (if standing still, may be so called,) that in its enjoyment he would remain intently watching the most trifling occurrence which came under his observation, with his nose flattened against the pane, as little aware of the circumstance as the anxious hero who stuck his spear through his foot without knowing it, while leaning his chin on the reversed end of it watching the fate of a battle. I remember, too, that opposite to the windows, one of which, that nearest the fire-place, was the solace of my parent's leisure, there was a recess in which stood a sideboard, perpetually decorated with cruets, beakers, and glasses, and three mahogany cases, two for smart-handled knives, and one in the centre for spoons, over which sideboard was affixed to the panel, (for the room was wains-coated,) a round mirror, encircled with gilt bouluses, supporting two branches for candles; and over the mantel-piece hung a portrait of my father himself, when a smart young man, by an artist of the name of Abbot, who obtained a reputation for painting Lord Nelson more than

once, and who, I recollect, lost his life by swallowing as a draught, a mixture sent him from an apothecary to be used as a gargle.

The drawing-room had three windows in it; over the fire-place there hung a picture of my mother, by Wheatley, and in one panel at the side was a portrait of my sister Jane, who died before I was born; and in the other a likeness of my brother Cuthbert, who was seventeen years my senior, and in India at the time of which I now speak.

My grandfather I never saw; he was a physician in the West of England, or rather, as I suspect, an apothecary, &c., for I never could find his name in any old list of the college. He set my father to study the law, who, being deficient either in talent or industry, soon found, to use a colloquial phrase in a double sense that “he could make nothing of it”; he, therefore, abandoned it as a profession, and marrying soon afterwards, the old gentleman contributed liberally during his lifetime to support the establishment of the young couple, and at his death

bequeathed them a fortune perfectly adequate to all their wants and wishes.

My mother's maiden name was Gataker, and my father, who has been represented to me as a proud man, was very vain of the connexion. The earliest of her ancestors married a Miss Jocosa Burley; but the one from which, it seemed, she claimed to descend, was a clergyman who had been married four times. Certain it is that I have at this moment a seal of my father's arms impaled with those of his wife; and there I find the lion rampant per fess, sable and gules, and the cross pattee fleury with blue tips.

My father never was known so seriously and suddenly to lose his temper as when he was thought to be descended from the Norfolk Gurneys; (not that a more honourable or respectable family exists; and quite sure am I that a monarch might be proud of a connexion with one of its members, whose noble heart and charitable disposition would do honour to a throne); because he fancied his to be an elder branch

of the house, and that he sprang from the De Gourneys, while they were yet resident at Le Brai, before the conquest; and so satisfied of this fact was he, that nothing but a request from my mother to the contrary prevented his christening, or rather naming, my eldest brother Cuthbert, Eudes, after his pet ancestor, who assumed the name of Gournay, when Rollo, at the division of Neustria, amongst his adherents, bestowed upon him the fortress so called.

All this was a question of time and history, but hence arose his firm conviction that, instead of the junior, it was the elder branch of the family that settled in Somersetshire, and that the Gurneys of Barew Gurney and Ingliston, with all the accumulation of the Harptree property, had of right the precedence of the Gurneys of Keswick.

Of the plain blue cross on his shield my father was justly proud; and his gurnet capsized upon his chapeau gules, was to him a point of no little importance; and having not only great respect for his memory, but strong faith in his accuracy,

I have continued to use the same arms and crest even up to the present moment, without doubt, hesitation, or disturbance of mind.

I pass over the first sixteen or seventeen years of my career at a dash—*per saltum*. My school life was not a happy one. I was idle and careless of my tasks—I had no aptitude for learning languages—I hated Greek, and absolutely shuddered at Hebrew—I fancied myself a genius, and any thing that could be done in a hurry and with little trouble, I did tolerably well—but application I had not; and when my excellent mother (who survived her husband eighteen years) suggested to me, on the advice of Mr. Graham, a most worthy man and excellent magistrate, to enter myself of Lincoln's-inn and commence the study of the law, I could not help calling to her mind the history she had herself told me of my father's signal defeat in the same pursuit.

There is something extremely vague in the term studying for the bar—in seven cases out of ten it means doing nothing, under a gentlemanly

pretence; in mine nothing could be more unlike what it professed to be; I paid my entrance-money, gave my caution, and thenceforth proceeded to “mine Inn” for four or five days in each term, threw on my gown, walked into hall, and dreading the fatigue of even eating professionally, wrote down my name and walked out again.

It was necessary, however, to satisfy my kind and anxious mother, who, with something more like certainty than ever I considered justifiable by appearances, anticipated my elevation to either the Woolsack or the King’s Bench—the latter by far the more probable—that I should put myself under somebody who might do me the favour of permitting me to copy his papers *gratis*, while he did her the kindness of taking three hundred pounds *per annum* out of her pocket in return for his goodnature: and accordingly I was harnessed under the inspection and direction of the worthy magistrate whose name I have already mentioned, and confided to the care of a very learned gentleman of the

profession, who, at the time of my writing this, is filling a situation not very far below one of those which my too fond parent, in the ardour of her affection, had destined for my occupation. What might have been the result of my serious application to the dry drudgery of this learned man's office it is impossible for me to surmise. It so happened that the experiment was destined never to be tried, for, among my fellow-pupils at his chambers, there was one whose society and conversation I found so much more agreeable than the elaborated tautology over which I had to pore from ten o'clock in the morning till ten at night—dinner alone intervening—that I gradually relaxed from a regular attendance upon my work, first, to a gentle indifference, and then to an absolute aversion and distaste for the whole pursuit.

My young companion was a bit of a poet, a bit of an artist, a bit of a musician, and above all,—to me at the period delightful,—a bit of an actor. He knew several of the regular actors—they visited at his father's house—I was invited

by my young friend, and met Charles Kemble and Mathews. The latter at that period was new to London—his merits were not yet appreciated—he wanted that nerve and confidence which subsequent patronage and ultimate success inspired. I well remember the evening. Charles Kemble was grave and gentlemanly; but Mathews, although quite gentlemanly enough for all earthly purposes, was gay as a lark. He gave us imitations and personifications. There, yet unseen by metropolitan eyes, his old Frenchman, his old Scotswoman, all the bright and vivid pictures, now grown familiar to the public, were exhibited to us fresh in all the charms of novelty.

That night decided me as to Lincoln's Inn—not that I intended to mount the stage myself, but after seeing that exquisite mimic, the best actor off the stage that ever lived, I resolved to put into execution a design which I had previously imparted to my young friend—a design no other than that of writing a farce for one of the theatres.

The moment this notable scheme took possession of what I fancied my brain, law was at an end; I had no patience with the parchments. As that witty (now veteran) George Colman the younger says in his “Reckoning with Time,”—which, by the by, he wrote when he was five and forty, and fancied himself old,—

“—— Congreve beat Blackstone hollow,
And in *my* crown no pleas had Hale
To supersede Apollo.”

It is quite clear that when a man takes what is called a fancy, the one pursuit is paramount. A geologist will tell you that there is nothing in the world so interesting, so engrossing, so captivating, as perambulating a dull and miserable country, chipping off bits of rock, and scooping out lumps of clay. He sees no beauty in Richmond Hill—his only delight is in discovering and telling you of what it is composed. The finest mountain in the world has no charm for his eye in the mass. No; to be agreeable to *him*, he must go and knock a little bit of it off, and wrap up that little bit of dirt in a

a little bit of paper, and carry it to Somerset-house, and then take another little bit of paper, and write a history of it.

To ordinary folks nothing can be much more dull than such a course of proceeding ; to the geologist it is delight—upon me the particular taste for dramatic-writing had a similar effect : *Act 1. Scene 1.—“Enter Sir Jeremy Bootjack ;”* delightful thought !—there I saw him dressed as nobody ever was dressed in his life—he, the said Sir Jeremy, appearing in a sort of mongrel full dress with jockey tops and a pig-tail : whilst all the lovers and their ladies were to be flirting and tom-fooling about in the costume of the then present day. But what was all that to me ? Munden and Dowton, and all those men, wore court suits, and jack boots, and cocked hats, and pigtails ; and I was sure it was right, and so to work I went ; bought three or four French vaudevilles, (which, it being then war-time, were not quite so easy of access as they became after the Duke of Wellington had set Europe to rest and raised England to the pinnacle of

glory, whence smaller people than his Grace have been every day dragging her down,) and, filching an incident from each, made up my very effective drama.

Young as I was at that time, and inexperienced in such matters, a little observation assured me that the English audiences, who are, in point of fact, as undramatic in their notions as Methodists, would not be satisfied with a *single* incident, which, on the foreign stage, amply serves to amuse and delight. The French go to a play prepared to view the affair theatrically, and are ready to catch the slightest allusion, and enter into the spirit of the author—with the English it is necessary to thump in your meaning, to make every effect clear “to the meanest comprehension,” or else you fail; and as to incidents, there must be a dozen in a farce, one after the other, if you mean that people should laugh or be pleased. This being clearly the case, I set to work, and, as I have just said, crammed the materials of some four or five light French pieces into my maiden drama, (as

an Indian cook sticks kabobs upon a skewer,) and was, when I had finished it, convinced that I had at least equalled Foote, emulating therein the exultation which a dramatist of our own day expressed at having given “*Billy the go by*”—*Billy* meaning Shakspeare!—I recollect so well the anxiety with which I copied out my MS., the infinite pains I took to dash and underline the points which I felt quite confident would set the house in a roar, and the nervous solicitude with which I read my first effort to my young friend, who had promised when it was finished to present it to the manager.

My exemplary mother, who had a sort of instinctive horror of actors and actresses, was not slow to find out the enormity—as she thought it—of which I had been guilty. Something fell from my young friend during a visit which we were paying her, which developed the important secret—for such I intended it to be; and the result of the discovery was the following letter. Upon recording which, it may be as well to observe that my surviving parent had

shortly after my admission into Lincoln's-inn, given up her house in Bolsover-street, and retired to the neighbourhood of Teddington, leaving me in possession of some ready-furnished lodgings in Great Suffolk-street, Haymarket.

But for the letter—here it is:—

“ *Teddington, May 8, 18—.*

“ My dearest Gilbert,—I take up my pen with regret to address you upon a subject to which I once before slightly alluded, and upon which I am quite aware our opinions are at variance.

“ I think I may assure myself of your readiness to give me credit for an anxious desire for your happiness as well as your respectability, and for having no wish either to curtail the enjoyments which your income justifies, or to restrain the amusements which are congenial to your age and inclinations; but there is one point upon which I feel it my duty to speak out,—to warn you of dangers by which what appears a most innocent pursuit is environed, and to

endeavour, if possible, to check you in a career which I know you are on the point of beginning, or, perhaps, have actually begun—I mean that of a dramatic author.

“I dare say you will laugh at me for my apprehensions, and even ridicule the partiality which, in the midst of my fears, magnifies my son into a “dramatic author,” because, as I happen to know, he has written a farce. Everything has a beginning; and if this farce be produced and succeeds, it will only be the first of a lengthened race; if it fail, you will be exposed to the ridicule of the newspapers and the green-room. Why adopt such an alternative?

“Now, understand me, my dear Gilbert. Do not imagine that I feel any of those blind and determined prejudices against actors and actresses which you have, more than once, half playfully and half in earnest, accused me of maintaining. I have no doubt that they may be extremely worthy persons in their way. What I contend for is, that while pursuing your studies for a serious avocation, in which no suc-

cess can be hoped for, without sedulous attention, it will be ruinous to associate with a class of men and women whose whole existence is one tissue of artificiality; who see nature not in her proper colours, but through the darkened medium of theatrical lamp-light, and who, from the constant mechanical repetition of exalted sentiments, the personification of conflicting passions, and the assumption of a diversity of characters, are rendered callous to the realities of life,—except when they may personally affect their own interests,—and are imbued with a contempt for those principles and qualities which they habitually treat as mere matters of acting.

“ It is curious to observe, although the effect may be extremely natural, how the force of habit weakens the value and importance of the most serious objects in our existence. How different are the feelings of the man who administers an oath to a witness in a court of justice from those of the individual to whom it is tended ! The undertaker’s man at a funeral, if he be serious at all, is sad only in the way of business. No

ceremony of that nature or character could be made either solemn or affecting to him. The butcher never could be brought to pity the struggles of a dying lamb. The dramatic performer, in the same way, talks of honour, and virtue, and the best affections of the heart, like a parrot; and although, here and there, there may be one whose taste for literature induces him to dwell upon some splendid passages of our great dramatic poets, he speaks and thinks even of those professionally,—and considers them relatively to the ‘effect’ they will produce in the delivery, and not with reference to the principles they inculcate or the virtues they applaud.

“ But it is not with the individuals I quarrel; nor is it just that a universal censure should be applied to a community in which there are, no doubt, many exceptions to the general rule. It is to the art, or calling, and to the pursuits connected with it, I object, as affecting the study of the law. I hate lecturing, and, indeed, am not well qualified for it; but experience convinces

me that the avocations of the lawyer and the dramatist are incompatible. You need not tell me that there are many attractions in the prospect of success as a dramatist, which, to a very young man, are in a high degree alluring—the facility which it affords to an introduction to the gay and lively,—the *entrée* to the playhouses,—the society of wits,—the association with talent and beauty. But ask yourself, my dear child, whether these enticements are to be admitted or rejected. Look round, and see whether any instance exists of high professional success in any other pursuit, where the equivocal avocation of play-writing has been adopted.”

I recollect perfectly well throwing down my mother’s letter when I came to this passage, absolutely indignant at the supposition of the incompatibility of my two pursuits. But when I came to the examination of facts, I found myself unable to make out a case. Sheridan was my strong hold: but that failed me; for although his genius placed him in the first ranks of society, (and he was then yet in full strength

and vigour,) he had never established himself in a profession. Murphy was a barrister; but although he was a good dramatic author, he never shone at the bar. Our own George Colman, with talent equal to anything, began with the law; he became an admirable dramatist, but no lawyer.

Then I bethought me of Addison, whose one great play established him in the highest class of dramatic authors, but I found myself little better off; for he, like Sheridan, made no figure in any learned profession: but having been for many years avowedly “a man of letters,” married Lady Warwick, got into Parliament, and was made Secretary of State. Now, said I, I have my triumph. I’ll quote Addison upon my exemplary parent. But no: what his biographer says of him settled that question:—“In 1717 he rose to his highest elevation, being made Secretary of State; *but it is universally confessed that he was unequal to the duties of the place.*” This, considering the Secretaries of State we have since seen flourishing in office,

was rather a damper to my ardour in *his* behalf. “In the House of Commons he could not speak, and therefore was useless to the Government. In the office he could not issue an order without losing his time in quest of fine expressions. What he gained in rank he lost in credit, and finding by experience his own inability, was forced to solicit his dismission with a pension of 1500*l.* a-year. His friends palliated this relinquishment, of which both friends and enemies knew the true reason, with an account of declining health, and the necessity of recess and quiet. *He now returned to his vocation, and began to plan literary occupations for his future life.* He prepared a *tragedy* on the death of Socrates, and——”

Here I threw down the book in despair. The author, incompetent to the fulfilment of high office in real life, returns from the station to which he had ascended, and, resuming his vocation, prepares a tragedy. This vexed me.

Congreve was my next attempt. He died in honour and in affluence, and his body lay in

state in the Jerusalem Chamber, and the Duke of Bridgewater, and Lord Godolphin, and Lord Wilmington, and the Lord knows whom besides, were pall-bearers. What could my exemplary parent say to *that*?—When I asked the “authorities,” they answered me, that “Congreve was sent to school at Kilkenny, and thence to the University of Dublin, where he acquired a perfect skill in all the branches of polite literature; a little after the revolution in 1688, he was sent over to London, and placed in the Middle Temple, but—”—What did I see?—“*the law proving too dry for him, he troubled himself little with it, and continued to pursue his former studies.*” He brought out his “Old Bachelor” in 1693, and—

“Well,” said I, “here is another break-down; but still his admirable plays have procured for him an immortal reputation. What signified the law to him? He must have been as proud of his place in society as any Lord Chief Justice in Christendom.” There again was I wrong,

for Voltaire has recorded of him quite the contrary.

“ He raised the glory of comedy,” says Voltaire, “ to a greater height than any English writer before or since our time—he wrote only a few plays, but they were excellent in their kind—the laws of the drama are strictly observed in them.” This praise elated and delighted me: what immediately follows I confess surprised me—“ They abound with characters which are shadowed *with the utmost delicacy, and we meet with not so much as one low or coarse jest.*”

What can more strongly mark the difference which exists between the manners and conversation of Congreve’s day and our own? In order to render Congreve’s comedies durable on the modern stage, more than one-third of the dialogue is now either omitted or greatly modified—a circumstance which gave rise to that witty observation of Sheridan’s, who, after witnessing the representation of “ Love for Love,” purified

for the refined modern public, said,—“ This is not Congreve’s play—the popular fastidiousness has ruined it—such prunings for propriety’s sake are like the emasculation of animals; you eradicate their vice, but you destroy their vigour.”

Still, however, I dwelt upon Voltaire’s praises. “ He was infirm,” says Voltaire, “ and come to the verge of life when I knew him. Mr. Congreve had one defect, which was his entertaining *too mean an idea of his profession, that of a writer.*”

What, said I, was even Congreve ashamed of play-writing—he who (as his French friend says) owed to it both fame and fortune? This, thought I, is as bad an answer to my mother as any of the former ones which I had prepared.

I then bethought me of Massinger, a man universally esteemed, as I had always heard,—but *he* served me no better than the others; for having been entered of St. Alban’s Hall, Oxford,

he applied his mind to poetry and romance for four years or more, and not to logic or philosophy, as he ought to have done, and for which alone he was patronized by the Earl of Pembroke. He left the University *without a degree*, became a play-writer, and died in his house near the Theatre—to be sure he was a good play-writer, but he was nothing else.

Otway, like Massinger, had, or might have had, the advantages of an University education—but leaving College *without a degree*, took to writing plays for his livelihood—they were good plays—popular plays, and he was a successful author,—but he died of starvation, or rather in the act of hastily satisfying the hunger under which he had been suffering, through the charity of a stranger in a Coffee House.—I did not think it prudent to let Otway loose upon my mother, neither could I venture to quote Farquhar, whose career began under equally auspicious circumstances, and ended nearly as ill.

Rowe, who was the son of a Sergeant-at-Law, was by his father entered of the Middle Temple at an early age; and being extremely clever, could have made himself a highly distinguished member of the profession—but—at twenty-four he wrote a tragedy, and, although he lived respectably, and received the honours of a grave in Poets' Corner, he never made a figure at the Bar.

Ben Jonson was a bricklayer, and then a soldier, but the “said Ben” neither built houses nor reaped laurels. Beaumont was the son of a judge, and entered of the Inner Temple; but, says his biographer, “it does not appear *that he made any proficiency in the law*, his passion for the Muses being such as made him devote himself entirely to the Muses.” Foote was educated at Oxford, and thence removed to the Temple, as designed for the law. “The dryness and gravity of this study, however, not suiting the vivacity and volubility of Foote’s spirit, *and his fortune, whatever it was, being dissipated, he took to the stage.*” I then began

to despair; I looked round me, but found no more justification in the successes of my contemporaries than in those of my predecessors, and accordingly, instead of replying with the pertness of self-sufficiency to my mother, upon a point where, as it seemed to me, she was unsassable, I fell to calculating, since there must be a choice, and since it was clear that the “two trades could never agree,” which was likely to be the pleasanter and more profitable of the two.

The result of these deliberations was a resolution for the present to temporise—to finish my one farce, if I never wrote another, and then to judge, by its reception and success, whether I should entirely renounce or decidedly embrace the craft of play-writing, for which, as every dunce who spoiled paper thought before me, I fancied I had a “wonderful talent.”

It was to the effect of procrastinating my final decision upon these points that I wrote to my excellent mother, imploring her to believe that I duly appreciated all her care and kind-

ness, and assuring her, that, let me take what course I might, she might be perfectly certain that I should do nothing to disgrace the family of the Gurneys, or its alliance with that of Gataker.

I had, however, accidentally placed myself in a situation full of temptation. I could not obtain chambers in Lincoln's Inn, which I was anxious to secure, and, as I have already mentioned, took a first floor in Suffolk-street, Charing Cross, then extremely unlike what it afterwards became, in the course of the improvements in that neighbourhood. At that period it consisted for the most part of tailors' houses, the upper floors of which were tenanted in their different degrees by gentlemen loose upon town, visitors to the metropolis, and officers on half-pay, of which it appeared the greater proportion were considered to be "frae the North," inasmuch as Suffolk-street was nicknamed in that day "The Scotch Barracks."

I had been settled in my apartments a few days only, when I perceived from my windows during

the morning, a constant passing and repassing of pretty-looking women, with a certain perking, jerking pace, gaily drest, particularly smart about the feet and ankles, with parasols over their heads, and little rolls of paper in their hands; and men with their hats on one side, and frills, and chains, and frogged coats with fur collars, although it was May! and I heard them hum songs and quaver out cantabiles as they swaggered down the street and up the street. I thought I could not be mistaken in their vocation, and thrust my head out of the window to watch where they went, for the street was a *cul de sac*, and the only place to which I fancied they could resort was a sort of tavern, which I one day explored, in the right-hand corner. To my surprise I saw them all enter a house exactly opposite that tavern—then I saw a smart chariot drive up and stop at the same place—then I saw come out of it two well-known London performers. I was delighted—I was in the middle of Attica—in the region of Thespis. I rang the bell, and inquired of the

rosy-cheeked maid of the house, what place “that was?” pointing to the spot whence the stars disappeared from my sight.

“La! Sir,” said the girl, “don’t *you* know? that’s the stage-door of the Little Théâtre.”

What charm had Lincoln’s Inn for *me* after I made this discovery? Here, in the plenitude of my devotion to the drama, could I see all the wit and beauty of the stage and the age in constant motion—here could I hear them talk in “*common parlance*”—and here I resolved I would renew, or rather improve, my acquaintance with the agreeable Mathews, and endeavour by his means to procure the representation of my farce, and the consequent *entrée* of the *coulisses*.

It sounds indicative of either grievous affection or woeful ignorance that I, professing myself theatrical, should not know where the stage-door of the Little Haymarket was located; it is, however, true that I did not till the house-maid enlightened me. No sooner had I obtained the information, than my intuitive and instinctive

love of the “art” induced me to prowl up the street and look into the dark dirty passage, progress through which was checked by a well-spiked gate; there, however, my heart lingered; and when my fellow pupil, who had just returned from playing truant, called upon me, we partook together the delights of this peep into Tartarus, and joined in a sympathetic anticipation of the privileges and pleasures we should enjoy when my admirable two-act piece had been received with unbounded applause by an “overflowing and delighted audience.”

How childish do all these anxieties and expectations now seem! How wonderful does it now appear to me, that a mind which has since been destined to bear with mighty evils, and endure the saddest reverses without shrinking or flinching, should have been so acted upon by hopes and fears, and doubts and wishes, the overthrow or fulfilment of which was, after all—for that was the great object—the power of smelling “lamp-oil, orange-peel, and sawdust,” behind the scenes of a playhouse!

The Fates seemed propitious; for availing myself of my previous introduction to the modern Aristophanes, I addressed him in the street the very first day I met him. There was a frankness and plainness of manner about him which quite delighted me; and after having conversed with him touching my “farce,” he told me that he would not only read it, if I wished it, but that he would himself present it to Mr. Colman, with whom he was in habits of intimacy. This was the very point I had been longing to gain; and when my new friend invited me to dine with him, at a cottage which he then inhabited at Colney Hatch, on the following Sunday, and bade me put my maiden production into my pocket, I felt extremely happy.

There must be constant alternations in this world of vicissitudes. I left my friend full of present gratification and future hope; I went to my rooms, and there found a letter, of which the following is a copy:—

“ Great Queen-street, Lincoln’s-inn-fields,

“ May 26, 180—.

“ Dear Sir,

“ I feel very great pain in writing to you upon the subject of this letter; but I think it my duty to do so, on account of your exemplary mother, whose anxiety for your welfare is incessant and unqualified. I have received a communication from the gentleman under whose care I placed you in Lincoln’s Inn, representing to me, for her information, the absolute uselessness of your prosecuting your studies under him in the manner in which they are at present conducted. He says that he cannot consider himself justified in receiving a stipend while your utter want of attention renders it impossible that you should benefit by his instructions, or that you should acquire either knowledge or experience from the practice of his office.

“ Unwilling, however, to take any decided step likely to wound the feelings of Mrs. Gurney, he begs me to offer you the alternative in

the first instance, assuring me that, if you decide upon a sedulous application and constant attendance at his chambers, he shall be most happy to devote himself particularly to your interests; but that, if you do not feel yourself able to come to such a determination, he must beg to decline any further professional connexion with you. I assure you this is extremely painful to me; but as I said in the outset, I consider I am only doing my duty to all parties concerned. Believe me, dear Sir,

“ Your’s, faithfully,
“ A. G.”

This was awkward—it was unpleasant. I felt I had acted wrongly, I was sure that my mother would be vexed and mortified; but I could not feel sufficient confidence in myself to promise such amendment as my task-master required. It appeared to me the wisest plan to go down to Teddington and see my mother, and explain to her my aversion from the profession for which she had destined me. The truth is, that I had

no absolute necessity for any profession. I had a gentlemanly allowance (for I was yet a minor), and at my mother's death I should become possessed of an income more than treble in amount to that which I at present enjoyed ; yet I could not say to her—dear, kind, excellent being !—that I anticipated any event which was to result from the loss of *her*. I was quite certain that I never should make a lawyer ; and I resolved to take my ground upon her own history, often repeated to me, of my father's entire failure in the same pursuit. But when could I go to her ? Here was Friday afternoon : I wanted to devote a few hours to my farce,—I could not spare time on Saturday,—and on Sunday it was to be conveyed to Colney Hatch to be read by a competent judge.

I remember when I was at school, two of the boys proceeded to a pond, for the purpose of swimming a gallipot, which was the property of the bigger boy of the two. It chanced that, in the eagerness incidental to this exciting amusement, the smaller boy tipped into the water, and,

after a good deal of struggling, sank, and was drowned. After the melancholy catastrophe, the bigger boy was questioned as to what efforts he had made to rescue his companion, and his answers made it evident that he had by no means exerted himself to the utmost. This conviction produced a severe rebuke from the tutor ; upon which Master Simpson burst into a flood of tears, and said—“ I *do* think that I could have saved Green—but—if I had tried, I should *have lost my gallipot.*”

My infernal farce was *my gallipot* ; and, to advance the success of that parcel of trash, I made up my mind to postpone my answer to my kind friend upon a vital question, affecting my future prospects, and delay my visit to my mother, whose heart and soul were devoted to my interests. I need not say, that, having come to this resolution, I passed the whole of the following morning in revising my work ; nor need I add, that, immediately after morning service on Sunday, I mounted my horse, and proceeded to the villa of my fostering patron.

I reached it in good time ; was presented to his amiable lady ; and, shortly after, walked with mine host to a small summer-house, which commanded a most agreeable view of the country, where I began, with faltering tongue, to read my production.

I saw that the effect it produced was not disheartening. My auditor smiled, and sometimes laughed ; but it struck me that his attention was somewhat too exclusively fixed upon the part which, in case the piece should be accepted, was intended for himself : indeed, my apprehensions of his peculiar partiality for this character were completely realized when, after a little hesitation, he suggested the introduction of two or three jokes—“hits,” I recollect he called them—into the speeches of that personage, the said “hits” being to be taken out of the parts which were intended for other actors.

Suffice it here to say, that I was quite satisfied with the reception of my bantling, not only from the manner of my host, but from what he

said upon the subject to his better half, and still more from the announcement of his determination to take it over the very next day to Melina-place, where Mr. Colman then resided.

To me this was perfect happiness. I enjoyed the air and the sunshine, and the dinner, and the wine, and the conversation, which, as the party was subsequently increased to six, became extremely agreeable and animated; and the favourable impression which had been made upon me at my first meeting with my new friend was even yet more improved as I became better acquainted with him, and found, in his observations and remarks, not only all the wit and drollery for which the world so justly gave him credit, but a depth and shrewdness to which much of the success with which he has been subsequently rewarded is unquestionably owing.

Having brought myself to what I call the first halting-place of my career, I shall reserve for to-morrow's task the record of occurrences which immediately followed this very agreeable beginning of my literary life—for so it must be

considered. Lincoln's Inn was fast disappearing in the distance ; and I resolved that, next day, while my drama was undergoing the Colmanic ordeal in St. George's-fields, I would make such an appeal to my mother as might terminate my suspense, and cut the Gordian knot of all my difficulties.

CHAPTER II.

WITH my head full of bright visions I returned to my lodgings, and having retired to bed, passed a feverish, restless night. I had heard conversations on subjects which were new to me; I had been admitted into the secrets of what, to a young and ill-regulated mind, is a very striking profession; I had been told stories and anecdotes of the private lives of public characters; and madder than ever with pleasure at the anticipation of the enjoyments I should reap from the acceptance of my farce, and my consequent familiarity with the wits and the geniuses and the players, I could not settle myself to sleep.

In the morning I arose unrefreshed, ate a tasteless breakfast, and mingled the azure milk with the almost colourless tea, without caring, or even thinking, what I did. Still, however, there was a clog of deeper anxiety hanging over my mind than this fitful, feverish kind of irritation. I had to make a visit to my mother; I had to express my regret as to the unconquerable difficulties which I thought interposed in my path towards the Bench, or even the Bar, and to decide the question so deeply interesting to my respected parent as to my future career; yet, somehow, my one day's association with wags and worldlings had very much altered the tone and character of my sentiments towards the old lady. I felt rather ashamed of my dutiful anxiety about her, and wondered what had hitherto made me so diffident in speaking out my mind, which, in the end, I resolved to do, cost what it might.

But a circumstance occurred the next day which, at any other time, would have been regarded by me as most important and exciting;

as it was, it made but little effect. My mother had received a letter from my brother Cuthbert (at that period more than thirty years old), informing her that he had been admitted as partner into the great commercial firm in Calcutta, in the service of which he had passed several years of probation, and that he felt it would be greatly advantageous to me, and, in short, open the road to a splendid fortune, if I were to be placed for some time in some banking or mercantile establishment in London, to ground myself in all the arcana of the counting-house ; and, after a certain period of education in that school, proceed to join *him* in India.

At that time the amusing pursuit of “shaking the pagoda-tree,” once so popular in our Oriental possessions, had not been entirely exploded : and, it must be confessed, the way in which he wrote was extremely tempting to a young gentleman endowed with a strong disposition to extravagance. Lacs and crores of rupees—maunds of cotton—pekuls of indigo—and a thousand things of which I had never heard be-

fore—sounded magnificently; and, to a young and sanguine mind, perhaps the novelty itself was even more attractive than the vastitude of the expressions contained in his despatch; but more than all, when he described the women—the ladies of the City of Palaces,—their sway,—their charms,—their interesting indolence,—their lovely listlessness,—the amiable manner in which they passed their mornings, playing with their lank ringlets before looking-glasses, till tiffin-time,—and then the amiability with which they performed the ceremonies of that peculiarly-named Eastern repast.—This combination of beauty, grace, languor, and tenderness,—with a detail of the vestibules, varhandahs, kit-maygars, hurkarahs, peons, palanquins, and punkahs,—influenced my mind for a moment, until I recollect that the scenery of “Blue-Beard” was infinitely more beautiful than that of Bengal; and that Mrs. Senior Merchant Mackirkincroft, or Mrs. Secretary Macnab, was, after all, like the ale she imbibed, of home manufacture, or rather, as the old joke goes,

like a pack of playing-cards made in England for exportation, with a penalty marked upon it if re-landed.

No, thought I, there can be no attraction that way *from* England; yet I must own the prospect of great wealth had a dazzling effect for a moment. It was but for a moment. A laugh in the street attracted me to the window, and I saw two of the *dram. pers.* (female) walking to rehearsal, with a fresh breeze blowing in their pretty faces, and pekuls, pagodas, peons, palanquins, and punkahs were instantly banished for ever from my thoughts. Nevertheless, the letter required attention. The proposition was one submitted to me by my mother, and must be attended to; so I resolved, *couête qui couête*, to make my visit to Teddington the very next day.

Still I could not quite abandon my “gallipot;” and so to work I went upon my precious drama, in order to write two comic songs, in a style which was then somewhat popular. Indeed, that of “Miss Bailey,” which then continued

in fashion, afforded the strongest proof of the effect produced by Colman in the narrative style. It has been translated into Greek, Latin, French, and German ; and I am not quite sure that it is not completely the rage at this moment in the best circles of Spitzbergen and Kamtschatka. As proofs of what a young author fancies good, I have preserved from the wreck of my papers these two “poetical” efforts ; and I am sure that, at the time I wrote them, I fancied them quite equal to O’Keefe, or Dibdin, or even Colman himself. Nothing is more extraordinary than a reference to such records, in order to prove what were the feelings and opinions by which we have been acted upon at some former period of our lives.

The first was to be sung in the character of Sir Jeffery Boot-top, by Mathews, founded upon an incident in real life : and thus it ran :—

SONG.

The plump Lady Tott to her husband one day
Said, “ Let us go driving this evening, I pray.”

(Lady Tott was an Alderman’s daughter.)

“ Well, where shall we go ?” said Sir Tilbury Tott.

“Why, my love,” said my Lady, “the weather is hot,
 Suppose we drive round by the water,—
 The water,—
 Suppose we drive round by the water.”

The dinner was ended, the claret was “done,”
 The knight getting up,—getting down was the sun,—
 And my Lady agog for heart-slaughter;
 When Sir Tilbury, lazy, like cows after grains,
 Said, “The weather is low’ring, my love ; see, it rains—
 Only look at the drops in the water,—
 The water,—
 Only look at the drops in the water.”

Lady Tott, who, when earnestly fixed on a drive,
 Overcame all excuses Sir Til might contrive,
 Had her bonnet and parasol brought her :
 Says she, “Dear Sir Til, don’t let *me* ask in vain ;
 The dots in the pond which you take to be rain
 Are nothing but flies in the water,—
 The water,
 Are nothing but flies in the water.”

Sir Tilbury saw that he could not escape ;
 So he put on his coat, with a three-doubled cape,
 And then by the hand gently caught her ;
 And lifting her up to his high one-horse “shay”
 She settled her “things,” and the pair drove away,
 And skirted the edge of the water,—
 The water,—
 And skirted the edge of the water.

Sir Til was quite right ; on the top of his crown,
 Like small shot in volleys, the rain peppered down,—

Only small shot would do much more slaughter,—
Till the gay Lady Tott, who was getting quite wet,
Said, “ My dear Sir T. T.,” in a kind of half pet,
“ Turn back, for I’m drench’d with rain-water,—
Rain-water,—
Turn back, for I’m drench’d with rain-water.”

“ Oh, dear Lady T.,” said Til, winking his eye,
“ You every thing know so much better than I.”
(For, when angry, with kindness he fought her,)
“ You may fancy this rain, as I did before ;
But you show’d me my folly ;—’tis really no more
Than the skimming of flies in the water,—
The water,—
The skimming of flies in the water.”

He drove her about for an hour or two,
Till her Ladyship’s clothes were completely soak’d through,
Then home to Tott Cottage he brought her,
And said, “ Now, Lady T., by the joke of to-night,
I’ll *reign* over you ; for you’ll own that I’m right,
And know rain, Ma’am, from flies in the water,—
The water,—
Know rain, Ma’am, from flies in the water.”

This was one of the effusions for the sake of which I abandoned my studies, neglected my parent, and expended two hours ; yet I confess, when it was finished, I thought I had “ done it.” But I had another to do ; for it had been hinted to me, during the time that my maiden produc-

tion was undergoing the process of examination by the manager, that it wanted enlivening ; and, moreover, that if Mr. Mathews had a song, Mr. Liston would expect to have one also ; that these were little points of professional etiquette which were as rigidly observed as the rules and ceremonies of other services ; and that there would be as great an impropriety in offering a secondary part to a first-rate actor, or putting a secondary actor into a first-rate part, as there would be in giving a lieutenant a field-officer's command, or sending a commander to commission a seventy-four.

I was somewhat puzzled for a subject, fancying that the songs of a drama should have some reference to the plot and dialogue of the piece ; but upon this point I was very speedily enlightened. Instead of following the example of Gay, in the “ Beggar's Opera,” Bickerstaff, in “ Love in a Village,” or Sheridan, in the “ Duenna,” in which operas the music seems but an adjunct to the dialogue, and the songs, the natural sentiments arising out of it, only versified,—I was

told that, much after the fashion of the man who introduced his story of a gun, *à propos* to nothing, a song, no matter what its subject or purport, might be cleverly and properly introduced by three lines of preparatory prose.

This principle established, I had no hesitation in proceeding to my task. At that period it was the rage to parodize tragedies. Horace Smith wrote a parody on “George Barnwell;” Horace Twiss did another; and Theodore Hook indulged the town with one upon “Othello,” and, I believe, an *extremely facetious* ridicule of “Hamlet.” The good taste of such proceedings I do not mean to discuss; that these things *had been* successful was enough for me, and I determined to follow in the wake, and accordingly produced the following travestie of “Venice Preserved,” which was to receive additional point and piquancy by being sung with an Irish brogue:—

Tune—*The Sprig of Shillelagh.*

Och tell me the truth now, and did you ne’er hear
Of a pair of big traitors, called Jaffier and Pierre,

Who thought that their country was shockingly served ?
 Who met in the dark, and the night, and the fogs,—
 Who “ who howl'd at the moon,” and call'd themselves
 “ dogs,”
 Till Jaffier to Pierre pledged his honour and life,
 And into the bargain his iligant wife,—
 By which very means was ould Venice preserved.

The ringleaders held a snug club in the town,
 The object of which was to knock the Doge down,
 Because from his duty they thought he had swerved.
 They met every evening, and more was their fault.
 At the house of a gentleman, Mr. Renault,
 Who—Och, the spalpeen !—when they all went away,
 Stayed at home, and made love to the sweet Mrs. J.,—
 By which, in the end, was ould Venice preserved.

When Jaffier came back, his most delicate belle—
 Belvidera they call'd her—determined to tell
 How she by old Renault that night had been served.
 This blew up a breeze, and made Jaffier repent
 Of the plots he had laid : to the Senate he went.
 He got safe home by twelve : his wife bade him not fail ;
 And by half-after-one he was snug in the gaol,—
 By which, as we'll see, was ould Venice preserved.

The Doge and the Court, when J.'s story they'd heard,
 Thought it good for the country to forfeit their word,
 And break the conditions they should have observed
 So they sent the police out to clear every street,
 And seize whomsoever by chance they might meet ;
 And before the bright sun was aloft in the sky,
 Twenty-two of the party were sentenced to die,—
 And that was the way was ould Venice preserved.

Mr. Jaffier, who 'peach'd, was let off at the time ;
But that wouldn't do, he committed a crime,
Which punishment more than his others deserved ;
So when Pierre was condemn'd, to the scaffold he went.
Pierre whisper'd and nodded, and J. said "Content."
They mounted together, till kind Mr. J.,
Having stabb'd Mr. P., served himself the same way,—
And so was their honour in Venice preserved.

But och ! what a scene, when the beautiful Bell,
At her father's, found out how her dear husband fell !
The sight would the stoutest of hearts have unnerved.
She did nothing but tumble, and squabble, and rave,
And try to scratch J., with her nails from the grave.
This lasted three months, when, cured of her pain,
She chuck'd off her weeds, and got married again,—
By which very means was this *Venus* preserved.

In this piece of tom-foolery I trace the first fruits of that disposition to treat high and serious subjects farcically, which is engendered and fostered in the society of those who, as my poor mother said in her letter, from which I have already made an extract, are habituated to judge of real events histrionically. The effect the thing produced at the time remains to be told.

Having done my task, I enclosed my effusions to my Mecænas, and prepared for my departure on the next morning to Teddington,

endeavouring if possible to fix my thoughts upon the proposition contained in my brother's letter, and upon the solicitude which I well knew my excellent parent would feel as to my decision ; but I found this a much more difficult task than the grave and sober-minded may suppose. The moment I had settled myself, some trivial accident would scatter my thoughts ; and while I was pondering upon my future destiny, I found myself singing the most important passages of Cuthbert's despatch to the tune of the “Sprig of Shillelagh,” to which I had written my ridiculous parody.

I was still in the agonies of suspense—eight-and-forty hours had elapsed, and no tidings of my drama. Every man fancies his own affairs of paramount importance. Dennis the critic came away from the sea-side because he imagined the King of France was sending a ship to carry him off, in consequence of his having written a severe squib against him in the shape of a pamphlet ; and I once knew a young ensign who, expressing to me his anxiety that a leave of

absence which was about to be granted him should be correct to the letter, told me that he was the more solicitous, as he had only entered the service three days before, and the eyes of the whole army were upon him.

It never occurred to me, while I earnestly watched every knock or ring at the door in expectation of Mr. Colman's fiat, that Mr. Colman had fifty other things to do besides reading my farce—that perhaps he had never even opened it. I did not then know the story of Sheridan and the playwright, which is vouched for upon good authority. The playwright had sent a comedy to Mr. Sheridan for perusal, and of course approval, and of course heard nothing more of his comedy. He waited six months patiently—the season was then over, and he therefore resolved to wait on till the next season began: he did so—he then called at Mr. Sheridan's, who at that time lived in George-street, Hanover-square—not at home, of course—he then dispatched a note—no answer—another—ditto—another call—still the same result. At last,

however, the author hit upon the expedient of posting himself in the hall, on a day in the evening of which there was to be an important debate in the House of Commons. This was a blockade which even the ingenuity of the wit could not evade; the author was therefore admitted.

His inquiries were respectful, but earnest.
“*My comedy, Mr. Sheridan—I—*”

“Yes—to be sure—clearly—the—?”

“*Fashionable Involvements*, in five acts,” said the author, helping his great friend to the name of his work, which he hoped might recal the work itself to his recollection—a hope most vain.

“Upon my word,” said Sheridan, “I—I’m in a great hurry—I really don’t remember—I am afraid your play has been somehow mislaid.”

“Mislaid!” exclaimed the anxious parent of the lost bantling. “My dear Sir, if it is, I am ruined—I have no copy of it.”

“It is very unfortunate,” said Mr. Sheridan, “very—I’m sure I regret—I—”

“But what can I *do*, Sir?” said the author.

“I tell you what my dear friend,” replied

Mr. Sheridan, “I cannot promise you your own play back, because I don’t know where any of the last year’s pieces are; but if you will open that table-drawer, you will find a great number that have been sent me this year: you may take any three of those in exchange, and do what you like with them.”

Had I at the time when I was so sensitively alive to the fate of my farce known this *historiette*, I should perhaps have been better able to regulate my expectations.

On the following morning, however, I proceeded to Teddington, and found my mother and her friend and companion Miss Crab, at home. My reception was every thing that ought to have been delightful to a fond and dutiful son: somehow it was unsatisfactory, and Miss Crab was so plain, and the place was so quiet, and they began to talk so seriously to me, and when I heard them both expressing themselves sentimentally, I could scarcely hold my tongue to listen to them.

“Gilbert,” said my mother, “after what you have said with regard to making the law your

profession, I think I should not be justified in endeavouring to force your inclinations; but, painful as it would be to me when the time came to part with you, I do think this proposal of Cuthbert's merits your best attention; you see he is well established, his prospects are bright, and he holds out his hand to lift his brother into the same station."

"Why yes," said I; "but after all what *is* the station? He is only a merchant—now the law leads to the highest honours, and—"

"So it does," replied my mother; "but as you have yourself decided against striving for those honours, why try back upon what you have rejected, in order to draw a comparison unfavourable to that, which now presents itself?"

"I should never make a lawyer," said I; "and—I do not think I should like to be a merchant—there is something in the words shop and counting-house discordant to my ear."

"I think," said Miss Crab,—and what she said was true enough,—"Gilbert prefers being a gentleman to any other occupation."

“ He has not sufficient means to maintain himself in that character,” said my mother, “ and I apprehend, that if he rely upon his talents for dramatic literature to make up the deficiency, he will only reap what alone grow in abundance in that field—regrets and disappointments.”

My mother had touched the right chord.

“ Well, for *my* part,” said Miss Crab, “ I wish there was not such a thing as a playhouse or a player; they are the ruin of more young people than anything else in the world.”

I thought I never saw Crab look so frightful as she did at the moment she uttered that little speech.

“ I do not quite agree with you there,” said my admirable parent: “ I believe a well-regulated stage, speaking both morally and politically, might be rendered highly serviceable to the people, not more for amusement than for instruction—for when is instruction so gladly received as through the means of rational amusement?—it has the same effect upon the mind as indirect taxation has upon the purse—no sudden

and abrupt demand is made, which at once enforces a claim, and proclaims a superiority. If, through the medium of the theatre, morality and virtue were exhibited in all their beauty, and vice and dissipation held up in all their deformity, great good might ensue."

"Aye," said Miss Crab, "but they are *not* ; all the things the people run after, now-a-days, are either gingerbread pantomimes, culled from Mother Bunch, or stupid farces translated from the French."

Miss Crab looked more hideous than she did before ; but what could I say ? Had I defended the stage and farces, it would have led to endless controversies—Had I discarded them, I should instantly have been doomed to a pair of canvass sleeves, and perhaps an apron ; posted behind a counter, or stuck up on a high stool from nine till six, with a pen behind my ear, in some wretched hole of an office in a dark lane in the City.

The great difficulty I had to contend with, in these controversial conversations, as they threat-

ened to be, and which I have before noticed, arose from the fact that, although I certainly had not at that time an income sufficient for the indulgence of my favourite pursuits, and the enjoyment of my natural amusements, as I held them to be, I should be quite rich enough to please myself at the death of my mother. If she had lived to this hour, and I remained poor, I should have been but too happy; and I felt it impossible to explain to *her* the real grounds of my apparent carelessness of my future prospects. It was clear, too, that she was fast declining; and this very circumstance rendered it utterly out of the question to allude to an event which seemed to me too probably not far distant. I therefore resolved to temporize, and at last hit upon an expedient which, before I had turned my mind theatrically, perhaps would not have occurred to me, in order to gain time.

I suggested to my mother what I considered the inexpediency of plunging at once into mercantile life without some more distinct and explicit statement from Cuthbert. All that he

said, tempting as I admit it to have been, was said generally, and, for the most part, hypothetically. “I do not think it would be a bad plan for Gilbert to do so and so;” and “if” he did, he “might perhaps;” and “if he might perhaps,” why then, perhaps, “I might be able,” and so on. I argued that this was an invitation hardly strong enough to adopt as credentials for the total alteration of my pursuits and prospects, and what I considered my immolation in a counting-house.

My mother listened attentively to what I said, and appeared rather struck by my reasoning, although she did not see that Cuthbert could have said more, being, as he was, ignorant of what course I had shaped for myself in England.

“I am sure,” said Miss Crab, “it is as plain as the nose on my face—”

I looked at her, and thought, whatever it is, nothing can be plainer.

“——that Cuthbert wishes Gilbert to go to him; that there are bright prospects, the realization of which depends only upon his prepara-

tory attention and assiduity here. If I were you, my dear Mrs. Gurney, I would not hesitate a moment."

I could have strangled her.

"There," continued she, "is that highly respectable Indian house, Curry, Raikes, Yellowly, Lefevre, and Company."

"Mercy on us, Miss Crab," said I, "have you made that firm, with all their orientally-bilious names, to terrify me?"

"Not a bit, Mr. Gurney," said Miss Crab. "I know them intimately well; and, if your mother chooses, I will write to Mr. Yellowly, who is my particular friend, such a letter as will ensure you——"

"—the highest stool in the darkest corner of their counting-house," interrupted I, forgetting at once my notions of temporizing.

"Oh! Sir," said Miss Crab, "if I am to be subjected to such farcical remarks as these, and you are determined to throw cold water upon the scheme, I have done."

"I think, Miss Crab," said my mother,

“ Gilbert’s idea is not a bad one. He is yet young. A few months’ postponement can do no harm.”

“ There I differ with you entirely, Mrs. Gurney,” said Miss Crab. “ At *his* time of life, and in the society and habits into which he has fallen, six or eight months will make all the difference in the world.”

“ I fancy,” said my mother, “ that I know Gilbert pretty well; and I believe that, although idle, and gay, and thoughtless, he will never suffer himself to be led into conduct or circumstances likely to affect *me* or dishonour *himself*. If we were immediately to avail ourselves of your kind offer of writing to the gentleman you have named, and he were admitted to a participation in the duties of his office, and, after a severe probation of eight or ten months, Cuthbert’s offer should turn out of less importance than we at first imagined it, we should have lost so much time.”

“ Not a bit of it,” said Miss Crab; “ wouldn’t Gilbert be much better employed posting ledgers

and copying letters all the day, than lounging about the streets and writing farces ? There is no disgrace in a mercantile life ; and supposing he never went to India at all, what would he be the worse for knowing what he would learn in the City ?”

I could scarcely listen complacently to the odious interruptions and interference of my mother’s most excellent and disagreeable friend. I could not endure the woman for talking so sensibly ; yet I saw that, with a parent’s partiality, my mother leant very much to my views ; and I found, not without reason, that her readiness to acquiesce with me in the proposal of giving time for consideration arose from a latent unwillingness to lose my society altogether, and doom me to a transportation for life,—for such, a residence in India seems to those who have never quitted their “fatherland,” and who believe, with great reason, at all events where England is concerned, that “there is no place like home.”

It was somewhat past ten o’clock at night

when I mounted my horse at my mother's gate to return to London, and I must confess that I felt as if I had achieved a great deal in the course of my visit, in spite of fate and Miss Crab. I had, in fact, left my affairs, as far as regarded India, Cuthbert, and the partnership, much as I had begun upon them, with this signal advantage in my favour, that they had been under discussion and nothing had been decided upon, so that I felt myself quite at liberty to go on with a snaffle until my excellent mother thought proper to apply the curb.

There was one point upon which the old gentlewoman was particularly susceptible and tenacious, but upon which, as it happened, I had not yet seen reason to give her any uneasiness. She had—next to the playhouses and the actresses—a most sensitive and matronly horror of the designing wiles of the young woman creatures who enliven and illuminate the world; and proportionably fearful that I should fall a prey to some young adventuress, which, considering what I possessed in the way of prize-money, was

really not ground for serious alarm ; for it was clear that nobody who had anything would think of making a good speculation by catching a youth who had nothing. She never went the length of cautioning me against the artillery of bright eyes, or the music of soft words, because being a woman, although *my* mother, she perhaps was aware that the surest method of setting a young heart on, is by warning it off. “ I’m driving the pig to Cork,” says Paddy, “ but dont you let him hear *that*—he thinks he is going to Bandon.” Prohibit, prevent, and warn, and what nine times in ten are the consequences.

What happened to the ostler and the priest ? —I believe it is an old story, but never mind—it is in point. An ostler of the Popish persuasion annually paid two shillings and threepence halfpenny to his priest to confess and whitewash him at Easter. Down on his knees did he lay open his heart to the Padré, and tell everything he had done amiss during the preceding year. “ Father,” says Paddy, “ I water the whisky, I take half a quartern out of every peck of oats,

and I charge fourpence for horsekeeping and give my master but threepence.”—“Tell me,” says the Padré, “do you never grease the horses’ teeth to prevent their eating the beans?”—“Never, your reverence, never!” cries Paddy, with tears in his eyes.—“Good boy, get up wid ye then,” says the Padré; “tip us the thirteeners, and you are as clean as a whistle for the next twelve months.”

Those twelve months over, back comes the priest. The same mummary goes on; the same kneeling down and confessing to the absolving Padré,—whose infallible power of absolution is best tested by the fact that the infallible head of the Church himself, who can excommunicate and absolve every Roman Catholic in the world, confesses to his own particular chaplain,—and there we have the ostler at it again; the same questions are repeated the same admissions made—till at last Dominie reiterates his inquiry, “Have you not greased the horses’ teeth to prevent their eating the beans?” Different from that of the preceding year was the answer

to this—"Yes, your reverence, I have."—
"How!" exclaims Doctor O'Doddipole; "what!
an accession of crime as you draw nearer the
grave! How comes this? Last year, you told
me you had never done such a thing in your life;
how happens it that this year you have?"—
"Plase your reverence," says the ostler, "I'd
never have had sich a thought in my head if
your reverence hadn't been kind enough to put
it there."

Upon this principle, I suppose, my excellent
mother never directly cautioned me about the
sparkling eyes, the downy cheeks, the pouting
lips, and all the rest of the charms so likely to
catch such a person as I then was, lest "her
reverence should put strange thoughts into my
head." However, thoughts *had* been there,
without her putting; and I verily believe if my
new and absorbing passion for Thespian pursuits
had not unluckily intervened, I should have en-
gaged myself to one of the very prettiest girls
in the world, who shall be nameless. However,
the sequel will show how that affair terminated,

and in what manner I escaped matrimony. In the sequel, too it will be seen that if I were only singed in my *coup d'essai*, I got considerably more damaged in my subsequent career.

The one great point of delay having been gained, I felt myself more at ease than I had been for the previous week or fortnight. A sanguine mind always sees daylight through the darkness—and upon the principle and in the hope, which all through life have sustained me, I fancied that “something would turn up” before the possible return of letters from Cuthbert, which might favourably decide the question now in abeyance.

On my return home, I found, much to my delight, that my farce had been read—ay, and approved—for a note which I discovered lying upon my table, from my Mecænas, informed me that he would call upon me the next day at five o'clock, if I happened to be disengaged, take me over to Melina-place and introduce me to Mr. Colman, who wished us to dine with him. This, it may be easily imagined, was to

me as decided a “command” as if it had come from George, King of England, instead of George, King of the Dramatists ; and I did not allow a moment to elapse before I answered my friend in the affirmative.

I scarcely recollect how the intervening hours were passed ; my friend and *ci-devant* fellow-pupil (who continued to “make believe” in Lincoln’s Inn) was of course apprized of my *premier pas*, and I received his warm congratulations upon my initiatory success. The mere routine of eating, drinking, and sleeping, had in it nothing of interest, except as the performance of those ordinary functions served for points by which to reckon time, until the hour of my introduction to the Haymarket proprietor was to take place.

That hour at length arrived : punctual to the minute, my friend knocked at my door, and we proceeded together to the scene of action. I there found mine host everything that was agreeable. I met four or five “ladies and gentlemen,” all delightful in their way. Mr. Colman suggested

one or two alterations, which it would be needless to say were improvements, in my drama; and having despatched what I fancied our important business, we sat down to dinner, somewhere about six. How delightful the party was, may perhaps best be imagined from the fact, that we did not separate for the evening until five in the morning, when I returned home enchanted with the amusements of the day and night.

Everything was now *en train*. The following Friday—a day from which, for the commencement of any undertaking, I have a great and unconquerable aversion—was fixed for the reading of my farce, and my eyes were gladdened the very next morning, by seeing in the play-bills an announcement, technically (as I afterwards discovered) called “underlined,” that a new farce was in rehearsal and would speedily be produced.

The Friday came; and for the first time in my life I found myself in the green-room of a theatre—it was literally a green room, into

which light was admitted by a thing like a cucumber-frame at one end of it. It was matted, and round the walls ran a bench covered with faded green stuff, whereupon the *dramatis personæ* deposited themselves until called to go on the stage ; a looking-glass under the skylight, and a large bottle of water and a tumbler on the chimney-piece, completed the furniture of this classic apartment.

Upon the special occasion of reading my farce, a table, with pens, ink, and paper, was introduced, and deposited in one corner of the room under the cucumber-frame, and at which the reader was to preside. The actors and actresses began to assemble. I was introduced to such of them as were concerned in the performance of my hopeful work ; and having declined to undertake the reading myself, the manager proceeded to execute that task.

A dead silence prevailed as he delivered, in a hurried, monotonous tone, all the pointed and witty dialogues of the first scene, upon which I had spent so much time, and to which I had

devoted so much attention. Not a smile did I see ; Liston, from whom I had expected all the compliments of excessive laughter at the jokes introduced into his part, sat still and mute, the very picture of gravity, until the reader came to a bit which I had intended to be marvelously comic, when he made a face of so grotesque a character of extreme disapprobation, that Mrs. Gibbs burst into a loud fit of merriment, which was only moderated by a sort of admonitory look from Mathews,—who had the best part in the piece,—to spare the feelings of the young author.

For nearly an hour and a quarter did I endure this purgatorial process ; and I must admit, that, during that period, my feelings of self-complacency had undergone a very important change. Just as I anticipated a positive cheer, at a *dénouement* which I was quite sure must be unexpected, I looked round, and saw Mrs. Davenport, the main-stay of my plot, fast asleep, with her head in a corner ; and the aforesaid Liston, another of my props, tickling

her nose with the end of her parasol. It then occurred to me, that it would have been better that I should not have been present, inasmuch as in my absence, those ladies and gentlemen, who, regardless of my agonies and sensitiveness, thus practically exhibited their perfect indifference to my “work,” might have expressed their opinions in cabinet, and while they disapproved some portion of the performance, might have suggested improvements in others. When the reading was over, nobody said capital, or even good, or even tolerable. One of the gentlemen asked “When is this thing to be put in rehearsal?” “To-morrow,” was the reply, “and it must be out to-morrow week.”

“To-morrow week!” said one; “how am I to study this infernal part, nine lengths and a half, by to-morrow week, besides all the stock business?”

“*I* think,” said Mrs. Davenport, “that *I* should be better out of the farce than in it. Mrs. Kendall, or Mrs. Wall, would do just as well for all there is to do.”

“Anybody would do as well as me,” whispered Liston ; and then Mrs. Gibbs made her joyous, handsome face look hideous in my eyes for the moment, by giving a sign of perfect acquiescence in Mr. Liston’s opinion.

I felt that I could not endure their comments any longer, so sought safety in flight, and got out of the regions, into which at length, after many years’ working, I had obtained admission, not, however, without attracting the notice of my good-natured Mecænas, who walked down the street with me, and gave me his opinion, that I must reconcile myself to lose one or two of the principal performers ; adding that it was always the wisest plan to let a discontented actor give up the part of which he complained ; for your leaders of the profession, if they say they can make nothing of a character, generally back their opinions by their acting on the first night.

Here began those difficulties and annoyances by which the progress of a dramatic author is impeded : the operation of small jealousies

which the uninitiated cannot comprehend; the great vanities which the unenlightened are unable to appreciate; and the combinations for and against certain persons and purposes, the intricacies of which are hidden from the common eye, but the workings of which, more or less, affect every individual brought into contact with the dramatic department of English literature. The thing, however, was too far gone to retract, and I resolved to bear with fortitude evils which I then was foolish enough to think great, and submit myself to the guidance of those who, of course much better than I could be supposed to do, understood the nature of such proceedings.

The next morning was our first rehearsal. The cool atmosphere of the theatre in a hot summer's day, blended with the peculiar smell which all theatres have, was to *me* quite refreshing and invigorating; and when I found myself referred to by such of the performers as were present, for *my* views and opinions of how *this* should be said, and how *that* should be done, I felt tolerably reconciled to the absence of

two or three of the “stars” by whom I had hoped to see my work adorned and illuminated.

The efforts of five days perfected the work of rehearsal. My “Venice Preserved” song—the idol of my heart—was omitted, because the gentleman who was Mr. Liston’s substitute could not sing—a failing which I the less deplored, inasmuch as Mr. Liston, even if he had acted the part, had declined singing the song. My misfortunes, however, did not end here; for as it had been resolved to omit that song, and as the young lady who was to enact my heroine sang no more than Mr. Liston’s successor, it was considered not usual to have one song in a piece, not musical, and so out they cut my “Flies in the Water.” I own these two sacrifices cost me a pang, but it was decreed by better judges than myself, and away they went.

The time now drew near when my fate was to be decided, and no rational person can possibly believe how much I was agitated on the morning of performance. The sight of my

title, flaring in huge red letters in the play-bills, was in the highest degree gratifying to my eye. I stopped and perused the *affiche*, as if it had been a document of the highest public interest. I fancied I was known in the streets as the author of the new piece—I walked upon air. But as the evening drew nigh, I felt that aching pain of anxiety, which in other days, such interests could excite; and when it was time to go to the theatre, I scarcely knew whether I should be able to endure the trial.

After the opera of “Inkle and Yarico” came my drama. I was placed in the manager’s box, allotted the seat of honour behind the *treillage*, favoured by the presence of two of the handsomest and most agreeable ladies in London, and treated in the kindest possible manner. Overture over—curtain up—I listened to my own words fearfully and tremblingly; not that I heard quite so many of them as I had confidently expected, seeing that most of the low comedians substituted, for what they had not learned, speeches and dialogues, not one word of

which I had written ; indeed, during the greater part of the first act, the voice of the prompter was more generally audible than those of the actors. Still, however, we went on smoothly, but not with that spirit which I had anticipated ; and when the curtain fell, at the close of the first act the audience gave no signs of approbation or dissent, and the only sound which I heard in any degree indicative of popular opinion, was the loud twanging of an elderly gentleman's nose, who was fast asleep, with his head reclined against the partition of the box in which we sat.

The second act began, and in the middle of the second scene of it, several parties removed themselves from the lower boxes, evidently tired with what was going on. Would that the gods in the galleries had been equally well-bred ! their patience, however, was not proof against my drollery—one point of which, a cant phrase by my hero, Sir Jeffery Boot-top, of “ How d'ye know—don't you think so ? ” appeared, after innumerable repetitions, to make

the first seat in the pit angry—they began to groan, and then to answer Sir Jeffery's questions, with shouts of “No, no, no!”—these, by a natural transition, were converted into cries of “Off, off, off!” and at a quarter after eleven o'clock, the green curtain of the Theatre Royal, Haymarket, descended upon my condemned farce, and concluded my career as a dramatic writer.

I had anticipated a triumph—I had encountered a defeat. It was in vain I cracked the joke of “*laudatur ab hiss,*”—in vain affected to laugh at my own disaster. I rejected the gay supper which had been prepared to await the successful young author, and returned to my lodgings ashamed to look even the servants in the face; I hurried to bed, in the full consciousness of my failure, and the certain malevolence of the accounts of that failure, as they would appear the next day in the criticisms of the newspapers. I slept little—I made a hundred different resolves—I hoped at least my name would be kept secret—I anticipated

the misery of my poor mother at the publicity of my overthrow, in which, she of course, would find ample ground for congratulating herself upon her unheeded efforts to save me from such an exposure. I at length determined to fly the scene of my mortification as soon as possible, and by nine o'clock I had quitted my lodgings, and was on my road to the maternal roof at Teddington.

CHAPTER III.

As I cantered down towards Teddington, all the events of the preceding evening passed in review before me. I almost hoped that I had only had a frightful dream, and that the scene and proceedings at the playhouse were all images of a disordered brain—but the hope was vain ; and already in the streets the playbills of the day had negatively declared my defeat by announcing “Peeping Tom,” or “The Village Lawyer,” or some such ancient favourite, instead of a repetition of my doomed drama.

Breakfast appears to me to have been destined for a solitary meal—nothing to me is less

endurable than a breakfast party. I love the lengthened lounging meal made up of eating, drinking, and reading; but there is nothing social or sociable in its attributes; one cannot "hob-nob" in tea or coffee. Moreover, it is an ungraceful meal. Egg-eating and prawn-picking are not delicate performances: and, besides, a man when he is first up and just down, if he tries his mind and temper by a moral "spirit-level," will find that breakfast-time is not the time for company or conversation. Most especially, then, was I disqualified for a *public* breakfast at my mother's on this particular day, with Miss Crab for a companion. I therefore resolved to call a halt at Richmond, and take my morning meal at the castle, an inn full of delightful associations in my mind, and where the coolness of the breeze and the fragrance of the flowers promised to moderate the fever into which I had fidgetted myself.

I was, however, mistaken; for just as one of the waiters had arranged my table, and the huge urn, hissing and sputtering forth its steam and

smoke, was put down, another officious varlet, with a smirk and bow, laid upon the cloth the “Morning Chronicle.” Little could he conceive the dread and apprehension with which I regarded the fatal sheet. New to the world, and as thin-skinned as a Whig, I could not venture even to unfold the paper. I waited till the servants had retired, and then respectfully and fearfully lifted the front page and peeped into that part of the journal usually appropriated to “theatricals.” I saw the great word “theatricals” stare me in the face, and I hastily left my hold and closed the leaf with the haste and trepidation with which, in after years, I might have started back from the hiss of a snake or the growl of a tiger.

At length, having fortified my courage by a sip of coffee, I again approached the dreaded page, and having with fingers as cold as ice opened the paper, read as follows:—

“THEATRICALS.—Last night a new farce was acted at the Haymarket Theatre; as it was finally and decidedly condemned, any further

notice of the absurd abortion would be superfluous."

After reading this short, pithy paragraph, I felt that sort of gratitude to the writer, which a culprit may be supposed to feel for an executioner who puts him speedily out of pain: there was no tedious process of strangulation in this—no roasting before a slow fire—the bolt was drawn and the spine of my vanity broken without any lingering preparation. I thought "absurd abortion" rather a strong term: but I was glad to find that my name had escaped either the knowledge or the notice of the critic. I felt comparatively calm and easy, not at the moment reflecting that therewere more newspapers than one, published in London.

It was in this temper of mind that I heard—it was then past eleven o'clock—merry peals of laughter ringing by a company which, unperceived by me, had taken possession of the pavilion which opens on the terrace at the back of the house, and which appeared to be excited by some waggeries of which I could not exactly

comprehend the nature or character. I never was a listener nor an eaves-dropper; but the most incurious person in the world will admit, that nothing is so tantalizing as to hear laughter in an adjoining room without being aware of its cause, and nothing so worrying as to be treated with conversation through a wainscot which never rises above a sort of mumbling, grumbling noise, in sound something like what Colman in his Preface to the “Iron Chest,” describes as the distinguishing characteristics of a great tragic actor’s voice—“ Flies in a bottle—frogs in a marsh—wind in a crevice—and the drone of a bagpipe.” I could not—fond as I then was of laughing—endure to hear mirth going on, and not somehow contrive to be a partaker and participator. I admit, therefore, that I protruded my head from the breakfast-room window to catch some clue to the gaiety of my noisy neighbours.

“I wonder,” said one, whose voice sounded peculiarly familiar to me, “I wonder where the poor devil is to-day !”

“Dangling on a beam in his garret by a silk pocket-handkerchief,” replied somebody, whose tone and accent I also thought I recognized.

“No;” rejoined a third, “his suspense was over last night—to be sure, my dear friend, the idea of bringing out that infernal farce!”

“I did it to please the boy,” answered somebody. “I liked the fellow, and could not say no to the goose; but as for his farce, I admit it deserved to be condemned as much as anything I ever saw. The only hits in it I put in myself, but they were so overlaid by his own original twaddle that they were lost to the million.”

I felt the blood tingling in my ears and cheeks: the people were talking of *me*—I thought I could not be mistaken.

“Well,” said one of the amiable ladies, who acted as my bottle—smelling-bottle holder—the night before, “poor fellow, I pity him very much; he may be foolish, and I think he is, but he is remarkably good-natured.”

“Perhaps,” said some odious person, “you will presently find out that he is good-looking.”⁴ A roar of laughter followed this, which had nearly killed me.

“Saracen’s Head!” said one.

“Buckhurst!” cried another.

“I suppose,” said a third, “he is gone to tell his mamma the history of his misfortunes.”

“I believe she wrote the farce herself,” said a fourth.

“Well, poor devil,” exclaimed the first speaker, “let us leave him alone—his business is done—I flatter myself the shine was taken out of him last night, and there’s an end; so, what’s to be done till dinner-time—Patience in a punt, or a drive to Hampton Court?”

This speech, so surely indicative of a move, induced me suddenly to withdraw my head and make a retreat towards the front door, where I desired the waiter to bring my bill and order my servant to bring the horses to the door.

Here, however, I was foiled, for scarcely had I made two knight’s moves over the chequered

pavement of the hall, before I found myself surrounded by the gay party from the pavilion. Nothing could exceed their expressions of delight at finding me there ; the poor devil hanging in his silk handkerchief, whom they had been abusing five minutes before, was suddenly converted into their dear friend and delightful Mr. Gurney. The groupe consisted of several of my theatrical friends, and, to my utter horror, they began condoling with me on the annihilation of my farce before the waiters and chambermaids, all of them declaring unanimously that it had been unfairly treated, and that it possessed the most unquestionable marks of great dramatic genius.

I then did not know the world quite so well as I afterwards did; and when I saw the smile of friendship upon the countenances of these ladies and gentlemen, and felt the kind pressure of their proffered hands, I also felt assured that I had not been the subject of their conversation in the next room, but that some other man and some other drama had been so generally anathe-

matised ; and, perhaps, my ignorance was bliss, for seeing how extremely happy they were to meet me, and hearing how earnestly they pressed me to join their party, I countermanded my horses till the evening, and passed what, in the sequel, turned out to be a very entertaining day.

It was agreed—and what would I not at that period of my life have agreed to ?—that some of the party should fish, some walk, some row about, according to their several fancies, and that all should dine at the early hour of three; the reason for the adoption of a period so Gothic for such a meal being, that one or two of the party had to present themselves in the evening to the eyes of the admiring audience of the Haymarket Theatre.

Among the groupe was a man, whose name was Daly—who, of all the people accounted sane and permitted to range the world keeperless, I hold to have been the most decidedly mad. His conversation was full of droll conceits, mixed with a considerable degree of superior talent, and the strongest evidence of general

acquirements and accomplishments. He appeared to be on terms of familiar intimacy with all the members of our little community, and, by his observations and anecdotes, equally well known to persons of much higher consideration ; but his description of himself to *me*, shortly after our introduction, savoured so very strongly of insanity—peculiar in its character, I admit—that I almost repented having, previously to hearing his autobiography, consented to send on my horses to Teddington, in order to accompany him to that village after the departure of the rest of the party to London, in a boat in which he proposed to row himself up to Hampton Court, where, it appeared, he had, a few days before, fixed his temporary residence.

“ I hope,” said he, “ that we shall be better acquainted. I dare say you think me an odd fish—I know I *am* one. My father, who is no more, was a most respectable man in his way—a sugar-baker in St. Mary Axe. I was destined to follow in his wake and succeed to the business; however, I cut the treacle tubs at an early

age—I saw no fun in firkins, and could not manage conviviality in canvass sleeves. D'ye ever read the 'London Gazette?'"

" Sometimes," said I.

" In that interesting paper," said Daly, " I used to look twice a week to see the price of Muscovados. One hapless Saturday I saw my father's name along with the crush: the affair was done—settled; dad went through the usual ceremony, and came out of Guildhall as white as one of his own superfine lumps. Refreshed by his ruin, my exemplary parent soon afterwards bought a house in Berkeley-square, stood a contest for a county, and died rather richer than he started."

" And you, I suppose, his heir?" said I.

" He had not much to leave," replied my new friend. " He ran it rather fine towards the close of his career. My two sisters got their fortunes paid, but I came off with what we technically called the scrapings—four hundred a year, Sir, is the whole of my income; all my personal property I carry under my hat. Tim-

ber I have none—save my walking-stick ; and as to land, except the mould in three geranium pots, which stand in my sitting-room window, I haven't an inch. Still, Mr. Gurney, although I have not a ducat in my purse,

“ ‘ Yet I’m in love, and pleased with ruin.’ ”

“ I envy your philosophy and spirits,” said I.

“ You are right,” replied Daly ; “ fun is to me what ale was to Boniface ; I sleep upon fun—I drink for fun—I talk for fun—I live for fun ; hence my addiction to our dear funny friends of to-day. They just suit me—they do nothing but laugh ; they laugh *with* one when present, and *at* one when absent—but to me that is the fun.”

I immediately thought of the “ funny ” observations upon myself, which I had overheard earlier in the day, pretty well assured that the voice of my new laughter-loving acquaintance had not been the least loud in the debate.

“ I admit myself fond of practical joking,” continued my friend. “ I don’t mean in one’s

own particular circle ; there it is dangerous ; people are not always in the same humour—what they think uncommonly good fun one day, they will seriously resent as an insult the next. There's no judging with certainty a man's temper of mind, and it is not easy to ascertain how much melted butter a gentleman would like to have poured into his coat-pocket without kicking ; I avoid that sort of thing, but on the great scale I confess my addiction. Coming here yesterday evening, I stopped the chaise at the corner of Egham, to turn the finger-post at the corner half round—sent all the people bound for London to Chertsey, all the people destined for Egham to Windsor, and all the people destined for Windsor, to London—that's *my way*."

" Probably," said I, " but not theirs. And do you often indulge yourself in these freaks ?"

" Perpetually," replied Daly ; " I've whipped off every knocker in Sloane-street three nights running—a hundred and ninety-four, exclusive of shops ; and if ever the project

of lighting London with smoke should be brought to bear, I flatter myself you will hear of my darkening the whole parish of Pancras, by grinding a gimlet through a gas-pipe."

"These frolics must cost something," said I.

"Occasionally," said my friend; "but what of that? Every man has his pursuits—I have mine."

"I should think," replied I, "if you perform such tricks often, your pursuits must be innumerable."

"What!" exclaimed Daly; "pursuits after me, you mean? I'm obliged to you for *that*—I see we shall be better acquainted—of that I am now quite certain. One thing I *must* tell you of myself, because, although there is something equivocal in the outset of the adventure, I set it all to rights afterwards, and will prove to you that in fact all I did, was done for fun—pure fun."

I foresaw an awkward discovery of some sort by the prefatory depreciation of criticism; however, I listened to my slight acquaintance with complacency and confidence.

“ You must know,” said Daly, “ that I once had a brother,—long since dead,—and you must know that he was my elder brother, and he went abroad ; I remained at home, and was my father’s darling—he fancied nothing on earth was like me. I was the wittiest, if not the wisest fellow breathing, and I have seen my respectable parent shake his fat sides with laughing at my jokes and antics, till the tears ran down his rosy cheeks.—Nevertheless I *had* a fault,—I cannot distinctly aver that I have even yet overcome it,—I was extravagant—extravagant in everything—extravagant in mirth—extravagant in love—extravagant in money-matters. After my respected parent’s death, I lodged at an upholsterer’s—excellent man !—occupied his first floor—but paid him no rent ; on the contrary, borrowed money of him.”

“ Indeed !” said I, “ I——”

“ Don’t frown, Mr. Gurney,” interrupted Daly, “ you will find that it all comes right in the end. I’m as honest as a Parsee—don’t be alarmed—I was then much younger than I

am now; and, although the world unjustly, ungenerously, and invariably judge a man's character in after life, by the foibles of his youth, don't be prejudiced, but hear me. I borrowed money of him—I consulted him upon all occasions—he was delighted with *me*, I with *him*—reciprocity of feeling, you know, and all that sort of thing. My upholsterer was my *cabinet-minister*—who better? who fitter to be consulted when any new measure was on the *tapis*? So things went on for a year, at the end of which, I owed him fourteen hundred and seventy-two pounds, thirteen shillings, and ninepence halfpenny, without the interest."

"That was no joke, Mr. Daly," said I.

"No, but what followed was," continued my equivocal friend. "My *cabinet-minister* applied for funds—I had none at hand. I therefore quitted London, and retired to the blest shades of Holyrood—not that this sort of constraint was at all necessary, for my friend, the sofa-maker, never troubled himself to inquire after me."

“ Why, then, did you go ?” said I.

“ Why, you see I thought he might,” replied Daly. “ After I had hovered about Scotland, seen the sights, visited the Highlands, shot some grouse,—and a pretty job I made of that, umph !—I returned to Edinburgh, and began to be anxious to get back to London. I therefore took the resolution of killing myself forthwith.”

“ Horrible !” said I.

“ Most horrible !” replied he ; “ nevertheless I put that resolve into immediate execution.”

“ How ?” I inquired.

“ By transmitting an account of my death to the metropolitan newspapers in these words—‘ Died, at Antigua, on the 15th March, in the 28th year of his age, Robert Fergusson Daly, Esq., son of the late Thomas Fergusson Daly, Esq., of St. Mary Axe, London.’ ”

“ What earthly purpose could that have answered ?”

“ You shall hear,” said Daly. “ About ten days after this announcement, having ‘ incurred ’

for a suit of mourning, I proceeded to my friend the upholsterer. Dear man, I recollect his little white bald head peering over his desk in the counting-house as well as if it were but yesterday—in I went—made a bow—up jumped my creditor.

“‘ Ah, Mr. Daly,’ cried he, ‘ then what I have read in the newspaper is not true!—you are alive and merry.’

“ Upon which I, looking as grave as a judge, said, with a long-drawn sigh, ‘ Sir, I see you have fallen into the common mistake.’

“‘ Mistake, Sir,’ said he, ‘ no mistake in the world! Why, I read in the newspapers that you were dead. How those fellows do fib! ’

“‘ In this instance,’ I replied, ‘ they are as true as the tides to the moon—or the needle to the Pole.’

“‘ Why,’ cried he, ‘ you are not dead, for here you are! ’

“‘ So I am,’ said I, ‘ but I am not the Mr. Daly who died in Antigua.’

“‘ That’s very clear,’ said the old cabinet-maker, ‘ for, as I said before, here you are.’

“‘ Still,’ said I, ‘ Sir,—I thought the Sir good—‘ you do not understand; I am the brother—the twin brother of poor Bob Daly who lived here with you, and who has died, as I unfortunately know, deep in your debt.’

“‘ What !’ exclaimed the upholsterer, ‘ *you* his brother ! Impossible—ridiculous ! Why, I should know you from a thousand by that little knob on your nose.’

“‘ That may be, Sir,’ said I; ‘ but I was born with a knob on my nose as well as my brother. I assure you he is in his grave at Antigua.’

“ This astounded him, and he was proceeding to ring the bell in order to call up the house-maid, who had made herself particularly familiar with my knob, in order to identify me, when I pacified him by fresh assurances that he was mistaken, and that I was come to settle the account due from my late brother to himself.”

“ This,” said I, “ was all very funny, no doubt; but *cui bono* ?”

“ *Nous verrons*,” said Daly. “ The moment I talked of paying, all doubt ended; he felt

convinced that it could not be me, for he was quite of opinion that at that time I had no notion of muddling away my income in paying bills. So he listened, looking all the while at my knob—you see the thing I mean, Mr. Gurney,” said Daly, pointing to a pimple; “ till at last I begged to see his account—he produced it—I sighed—so did he.”

“ ‘Sir,’ said he, ‘this is—dear me, is it possible two people should be so much alike?—your brother’s last account before he went.’

“ I could not help saying, ‘ He is gone to his last account now, Sir.’ If it had been to save my life, I could never check my fun.

“ ‘Lord, how like Mr. Robert that is!’ said the upholsterer.

“ ‘What is the amount?’ said I.

“ ‘Fourteen hundred and seventy-two pounds, thirteen shillings, and ninepence halfpenny. As for interest, Mr Daly, I don’t want it.’

“ ‘Sir,’ said I, drawing out of my pocket a handkerchief whiter than unsunned snow, ‘ I honour and reverence you. I can now account

for the high respect and veneration with which my poor brother Bob used to speak of you and write about you. You shall judge what he has done;—he has died worth three thousand five hundred pounds; the claims upon him are numerous and heavy; in his letter—the last I ever received from him—he directs me to make an equitable division of his property.'

“ ‘ Poor fellow ! ’ said the cabinet-maker.

“ ‘ An innocent young creature, with three children,’ said I, ‘ first claims his care.’

“ ‘ Dear me ! ’ said the man. ‘ Rely upon it I won’t interfere there. No, no. I gave him credit farther than he asked it. I won’t visit his sins upon those who perhaps are helpless, and certainly blameless in this affair.’

“ There was something so kind in this, that I was near betraying myself; but I should have spoiled the joke.

“ ‘ After those,’ continued I, ‘ you come next; and, having divided his assets fairly, he decided that he could, acting conscientiously towards others, afford to pay you five shillings in the

pound upon the amount due; and, accordingly, I have brought you to-day a sum calculated at that rate—that is to say, three hundred and sixty-eight pounds, thirteen shillings and six-pence, for I don't descend to fractions.'

" ' Well now,' said the honest old man, ' I love and honour him for that. He needn't have paid me a farthing. I knew not where he was; —and to think of me on his death-bed!—that, Sir, shows good principle; and as you are so like him in everything else,—and how like you are, to be sure!—I hope and trust—don't be angry, Sir—that you will follow the example he set you in the last act of his life.'

" ' Then,' said I, ' you accept the proposal?'

" ' Most happily, Sir,' said he. ' I tell you I honour his feelings. I had given the whole thing up as lost. I thought he was a hard-hearted and a practised taker-in of credulous men—'

" ' Sir,' said I, bowing, ' you little knew my poor brother Bob if you thought that. Here, Sir, is the money; all I ask, as a satisfaction to

the interesting young creature who survives him, is a receipt in full of all demands as against him.'

"'In course, Mr. Daly,' said the upholsterer, taking the notes I proffered. 'Why, la!' exclaimed he, 'I declare you have got the very ring on, that I have seen a hundred times, with a leetel patent key twisted into the inside, that he used to wear.'

"'Yes,' said I, rather taken aback at this; for with all my cunning I had forgotten to dis-ring my finger for the occasion. 'Yes, it was the only thing he left me; and I wear it for his sake.'

"'And how well it fits!' said the cabinet-maker.

"'Often the case with twins,' said I. 'There are two hundred, three hundred, and fifty, a ten pound note, eight guineas, and five shillings and sixpence; count it yourself.'

"'And now,' said he, 'I am to give you a receipt in full; to be sure I will. But I do wish you would do me one favour, Sir,' continued he; 'I wish you would let my housemaid Becky see

you; she was very fond of your poor brother, and very attentive to him, and I should—I know it is taking a great liberty—I should like her to see you.'

" 'I should be too happy,' said I, trembling at the apprehension that the girl, who was more than usually civil to me while I lived in the lodgings, should make her appearance, convinced that she would not be deceived as to the identity, or believe in the story of two brothers having the same knobs on their noses; 'but don't you think it might shock the poor young woman?'

" 'No, no, Sir,' said he, looking over a black leather book for a proper stamp; 'Becky isn't frightened at trifles; shall I ring?'

" I could not help myself, and Becky was summoned. Luckily, however, she had just stepped out to get something, and satisfied, by the way in which the other servant conveyed the intelligence to her master, that it was not very probable she would soon return, I screwed my courage to the sticking-place, and remained

until he had written, signed, and delivered my entire acquittance from my whole debt, in consideration of the receipt of 368*l.* 13*s.* 6*d.*; having secured which, I made my bow and left my upholsterer, not ill pleased with the adventure of the day."

"Yes, Sir," said I, after I had heard this narrative, "but I see no joke in all this: it appears to me that a person less favourably disposed than myself would find a very different name for such a proceeding."

"So would anybody," said my valuable friend, "if it were not for the sequel. A short time after, I had the means to set all right, and lost no time in doing so; I confessed my *ruse* to my worthy friend, made him laugh heartily at his own credulity, paid him the difference, and gave Becky a guinea or two."

I honestly confess, that although my new friend polished off the end of his story with a few retributive facts, the account of his adventure with the cabinet-maker did not very much elevate him in my opinion, and I began again

to repent of having hastily engaged myself as passenger in his boat, so appropriately, as he himself said, called a “funny.” The only consolation I could afford myself arose from the consideration that our connexion would not be of long duration—that it need never be renewed—that few people, if any, would see me in my way up the river—and that, from all I had heard of him from himself, he did not appear likely to die a watery death, so that my personal safety was rather guaranteed than not, by my having placed myself under his command in our aquatic excursion.

I had never seen such a man before, nor have I ever seen such a one since: from the time he sat down to dinner till all was done, his tongue never ceased—he was *au fait* at everything—played billiards better than anybody I ever saw—jumped higher—imitated birds and beasts, including men, women, and children more correctly—caught more fish in an hour than all the rest of the punters did in three—sang all sorts of songs—made speeches—and told stories

of himself which would have made my poor mother's hair stand on end. One of his practical jokes, played off upon one of the ladies of our party, I must set down. She had never been at Richmond before, or if she had, knew none of the little peculiarities attached to it. He desired the waiter to bring some "maids of honour"—those cheesecakes for which the place has been time out of mind so celebrated. The lady stared and then laughed; Daly saw her surprise, and elicited all he wanted—her innocent question of "What do you mean by maids of honour?" "Dear me," said he, "don't you know that this is so courtly a place, and so completely under the influence of state etiquette, that everything in Richmond is called after the functionaries of the palace? What are called cheesecakes elsewhere, are here called maids of honour; a capon is a lord chamberlain; a goose, a lord steward; a roast pig is a master of the horse; a pair of ducks, grooms of the bedchamber; and a gooseberry tart, a gentleman usher of the black rod; and so on."

The unsophisticated lady was taken in ; and with all the confidence which Daly's gravity inspired, when she actually saw the maids of honour make their appearance in the shape of cheesecakes, convulsed the whole party, by turning to the waiter and desiring him, in a sweet but decided tone, to bring her a gentleman usher of the black rod, if they had one in the house, quite cold.

These were the sort of *plaisanteries (mauvaises, if you will)* in which this most extraordinary person indulged. In the sequel, I had occasion to see his versatile powers more profitably engaged, and which led me to reflect somewhat more seriously upon the adventure of the upholsterer and the receipt in full of all demands.

The dinner was rather inconveniently despatched, in order to suit the convenience of the engaged performers, and by seven o'clock my new friend and myself were left to commence our voyage up the river. His spirits appeared even higher than they had been be-

fore, and I felt myself, when consigned to his care, something in the same situation as Mr. O'Rourke on the eagle's back: whither I was to be carried by his influence, or how to be dashed down when he got tired of me, I could not clearly comprehend; nor were my apprehensions of consequences in any satisfactory degree diminished when my perilous companion commenced a violent wordy attack upon a very respectable round-bodied gentleman who was sitting squeezed into the stern-sheets of a skiff, floating most agreeably to himself adown the stream, the gentle south-west breeze giving the sail of his boat a shape very similar to that of his equally well-filled white dimity waistcoat.

“Hollo!” cried my friend Daly; “I say, you Sir, what are you doing in that boat?”

The suburban Josh maintained a dignified silence.

“I say, you Sir,” continued the undaunted joker, “what are you doing there? you have no business in that boat, and you know it!”

A slight yaw of the skiff into the wind's eye

was the only proof of the stout navigator's agitation.

Still Daly was inexorable, and he again called to the unhappy mariner to get out of the boat. "I tell you, my fat friend," cried he, "you have no business in that boat!"

Flesh and blood could not endure this reiterated declaration. The ire of the Cockney was roused. "No business in this boat, Sir!" cried he; "what d'ye mean?"

"I mean what I say," said Daly; "you have no business in it, and I'll prove it."

"I think, Sir, you will prove no such thing," said the navigator, whose progress through the water was none of the quickest; "perhaps you don't know, Sir, that this is my own pleasure-boat?"

"That's it," said Daly, "now you *have* it—no man can have any *business* in a *pleasure*-boat. Good day, Sir. That's all."

I confess I was a good deal shocked at this mode of terminating the colloquy. However, no ill consequences arose; the fat man went his

way, and so did we, and in a few minutes more embarked in Daly's "pleasure"-boat, in which I felt, according to his dictum, that I had no business whatever.

Richmond, which seems, every time one sees it, as if it were dressed to look lovely for that particular day, was smiling in all its radiance and gaiety; the velvet meadows of Twickenham, studded with noble trees, looked cooler and greener than ever; and my friend began to perform that incomprehensibly agreeable exercise of pulling up against the stream, when all at once a thought seemed to flash upon his mind, and a look of regret sadden his countenance; the expression was too distinct to be mistaken or disregarded.

"What," said I, "what is the matter? have you left anything behind?"

"No," said he, laughing; "but if I had thought of it, we would not have come away so soon from Richmond; and I would have shown you some sport in Cockney-catching."

"What do you mean?" asked innocent I.

“A trick specially my own,” replied Daly, “to be played with the greatest success between the grounds of Sion and Kew Gardens. Thus:—In the dusk of the evening—I prescribe scientifically—take a strong line, fix him to a peg in the bank of Sion, carry him across the river, and fix him to another peg in the bank of Kew; strain him tight, and then retire to watch the effect. Tide running down, presently comes a Cockney-couple, the man flirting and pulling, the lady sitting and smiling: when they reach the chosen spot, the tight line catches the Cockney Corydon on the back of his head, and tumbles him forward at the feet of his Phyllis; in a twinkling, the same effect is produced on the lady, with this single simple difference, that the cord catches *her* under the chin, and tumbles her backwards. In the confusion of the moment, tide ebbing fast, the happy pair are swept down the stream; and having, after the lapse of few minutes, set themselves to rights again, begin to wonder what has happened, and of course never think of trying back

against tide to ascertain the cause ; which, however, if they did, would assist them little, for the moment you have caught your Cockneys you cast off the line from the peg, and the cause of the mischief disappears from the sight—*probatum est.*”

“ That seems rather a serious joke,” said I.

“ Umph !” replied Daly ; “ perhaps you would prefer keeping the line, but for my part I am not particular.”

This he certainly need not have mentioned. Every moment added fresh evidence to the fearful fact ; I was yet unprepared for what was to come.

“ I wish,” said my friend, as he plied the oar, “ that we had stayed a little longer at Richmond. I think one more bottle of claret, *tête-à-tête*, would have been vastly agreeable.”

“ I should not have disliked it myself,” said I. “ Is it impossible to repair the mischief?—is there no agreeable retreat on these shores, in which we may solace ourselves for our imprudence ?”

“ No,” said my friend : “ the Eel-pie House

is a wretched hole—the inns at Twickenham are all inland—there is nothing marine short of the Toy, and we are to part long before I reach that much-loved spot."

"Then," said I, "we must make up our minds to the evil, and bear it as well as we can."

At this moment we were under the bank of a beautiful garden, upon which opened a spacious bow-windowed dinner-room, flanked by an extensive conservatory. Within the circle of the window was placed a table, whereon stood bottles and decanters, rising, as it were, from amidst a *cornucopia* of the choicest fruits. Around this table were seated a highly respectable family; a portly gentleman, whose cheeks and chin gave ample evidence that such refecti ons were "his custom always in the afternoon," and near him a lady, evidently his better, if not his larger half—on either side bloomed two young creatures, unquestionably the daughters of the well-fed pair. Our appearance, although the lawn was some twenty or thirty yards in depth, had caught their attention, as their re-

spective forms and figures had attracted our notice.

“There,” said I, “this scene is exhibited to us by our evil genius, to tantalize us with the prospect we may not enjoy.”

“You are wrong,” said Daly, “quite wrong—be quiet—beautiful girls, cool wine, and agreeable society, are worth making a dash for. Those girls will we become acquainted with—that society will we join—those wines will we imbibe.”

“Do you know them?” said I.

“Never saw them by any chance in my life,” said Daly; “but here goes—the thing is settled—arranged—done. Have you a pocket-book and a pencil about you? if you have, lend them to *me*; say nothing, and I will manage the rest. Assent to all I assert, and stay in the boat till we are invited to partake of the collation.”

“But, my dear Sir,” said I—

“Mum,” said Daly, at the same moment pulling the head of his funny “chock block,”

as the sailors say, into the bank of the garden, upon whose velvet surface he jumped with the activity of an opera-dancer. I sat in amazement, doubting what he was about to do, and what I should do myself. The first thing I saw, was my friend pacing in measured steps along the front of the terrace. He then affected to write down something in my book—then he stopped—raised his hand to his eyes, as if to make an horizon in order to obtain a level—then noted something more—and then began to pace the ground afresh.

“Bring the staff out of the boat,” said he to me, with an air of command, which was so extremely well assumed that I scarcely knew whether he were in joke or in earnest. I obeyed and landed with the staff. Without any further ceremony, he stuck the pole into the lawn, a measure which, as he whispered to me, while in the act of taking it, he felt assured would bring things to a crisis.

Sure enough, after a certain ringing of the dinner-room bell, which we heard, and which

conveyed to Daly's mind a conviction that he had created a sensation, a butler, *bien poudré*, in a blue coat, white waistcoat, and black *et ceteras*, followed at a properly-graduated distance by a strapping footman, in a blue and scarlet livery, were seen approaching. I thought the next step would be our sudden and unceremonious expulsion from the Eden we had trespassed upon—not so my friend, who continued pacing, and measuring, and “jotting down,” until the minister for the home department was at his elbow.

“I beg your pardon, gentlemen,” said the butler, “but—my master's compliments, begs to know what your pleasure here is—it is not usual for strangers to land—and—

“Exactly like the man in the boat, Sir,” said Daly, “only quite the reverse. I am not here for pleasure—business calls me here—duty, Sir—duty. Here, Mr. Higgins, carry the staff to that stump.”

These words were addressed to me, and I, completely infatuated—fascinated, like the bird

by the rattle-snake—did as I was told, not daring to rebel, lest a *dénouement* might ensue, which would *éclater* in our being jointly and severally kicked into the river, in which case, from the very little, or rather the very great deal, which I had seen of my companion during our short acquaintance, I felt perfectly certain that *I* should sink, and *he* would swim, and that while I was floundering in all the agonies of ignominy and disgrace, he would be capering and flourishing with the two pretty girls in the dining-room, laying all the blame of the affair upon my most incompetent shoulders, and cracking his jokes upon the tyro who had so blunderingly botched the business.

The butler, who found that he made very little impression upon Daly, seemed inclined to come at *me*, which, as I had not the slightest idea of the game my companion was playing, nor the faintest notion what he expected to be the result, alarmed me considerably. Daly was too much on the alert however, to permit me to be cross-questioned.

“Sir,” said he to the butler, “present my compliments to your master, and make my humble apologies for the liberty I am obliged to take. I am the acting Deputy Assistant Surveyor of the Grand Junction Paddington Canal Company, and an Act of Parliament is just about to be applied for, to construct and cut a branch from the basin at Brentford, into the river Thames, near this point. A great deal depends upon my decision as to the line it will take, and I should not have ventured to land without apprizing your master of my business, but that no time is to be lost, inasmuch as my plan for the cut must be ready for the committee to-morrow.”

“Cut a canal through my master’s grounds, Sir?” said the butler.

“Right through,” said Daly, poking the forefinger of his right hand very nearly into the butler’s left eye; “and what I am now so particular about is, I am most anxious that the line should not take down the corner of the conservatory.”

“Dear me, Sir,” said the man, “my mistress would go mad at the very thought of such a thing. Will you just wait, Sir, while I speak to Sir Timothy?”

“Certainly,” said he “and assure him—assure Sir Timothy—that I will do all I can to preserve the elevation of his mansion; for, as it all depends upon my opinion, I shall of course be extremely scrupulous how I decide.”

“I am sure, Sir,” said the astounded and mollified butler, “Sir Timothy will be greatly obliged to you. I’ll be back directly, Sir.”

Saying which the butler returned to the house, and giving a significant look to the strapping footman, with the grenadier shoulders and balustrade legs, which seemed to imply that he need not kick us into the water till he had consulted his master, the fellow followed him, which afforded me an opportunity of asking my volatile friend what the deuce he was at.

“Leave me alone,” said he—

‘Women and wine compare so well,
They run in a perfect parallel.’

I am the Company's acting Deputy Assistant Surveyor, and having surveyed this company, I mean to be made a participator in those good things of which they seem to be in full possession. Yes, Mr. Gurney, as King Arthur says—

‘It is our royal will and pleasure to be drunk,
And this, our friend, shall be as drunk as we.’

Who knows but we may make an agreeable and permanent acquaintance with this interesting family !”

“But,” said I, “you don’t even know their name.”

“You are in error,” replied Daly, “the man’s name *is* known to me.”

“Then perhaps you are known to *him*,” said I.

“That is a *non sequitur*,” said Daly; “I knew nothing of him before I landed here—now I am *au fait*—my friend in the powder and sticking-plasters calls his master Sir Timothy. There are hundreds of Sir Timothies; but what do I do upon hearing this little distinctive appellation, but glance my eye to the livery button of

the lacquey—and what do I see there? a serpent issuing from and piercing a garb or gerb. The crest is unique—*ergo*, my new acquaintance is neither more nor less than Sir Timothy Dod."

"Why," said I, "you are, like myself, a bit of a herald, too!"

"Exactly," replied Daly, "in my composition are

'Arts with *arms* contending,'

I am a bit of everything; but somehow all my accomplishments are so jumbled, and each is so minute in itself, that they are patched together in my mind like the squares of a harlequin's jacket, only to make their master ridiculous. Here, however, comes Sir Timothy himself. You are my clerk—keep the staff and the joke up, and you shall be repaid with some of Tim's very best Lafitte, or I'm an ass."

"Good day, Sir," said Sir Timothy, somewhat warmed with the intelligence given him by the butler, and the exertion of trotting him-

self across his lawn. " My servant tells me that you are here for the purpose of deciding upon the line of some new branch of the Paddington Canal;—it is very extraordinary I never should have heard of it!"

" You ought, Sir Timothy," said Daly, " to have been apprised of it. Do you understand much of ground-plans, Sir Timothy?"

" No, Sir; very little indeed," replied the worthy Knight.

" So much the better," I heard Daly distinctly say, for he could not resist an impulse. " If you will just cast your eye over this paper, I will endeavour to explain, Sir. A, there you see;—A is your house, Sir Timothy; B is the conservatory; C is the river,—that perhaps you will think strange?"

" No, Sir," said Sir Timothy, " not at all."

" Then, Sir, D, E, F, and G are the points, from which I take the direct line from the bridge at Brentford; and thus you perceive, by continuing that line to the corner of Twickenham churchyard, where the *embouchure* is to be——"

“ The what, Sir ? ” said Sir Timothy.

“ The mouth, Sir,—the entrance to the new branch, the canal will clip your conservatory diagonally to the extent of about eighteen feet six inches, and leave it deprived of its original dimensions somewhat in the shape of a cocked-hat box. You see—so, Sir,—H, I, K.”

“ I give you my honour, Sir,” said Sir Timothy, “ such a thing would drive Lady Dod mad ! ”

“ I admit it would be a dreadful cut,” said Daly; “ and then the noise of the bargemen, and the barge-horses close under the windows,—clanking chains,—horrible oaths,—disgusting language——”

“ My daughters’ bed-rooms are at that end of the house,” said Sir Timothy. “ What am I to do Sir ? What interest can I make ? Are the magistrates—are the——”

“ No, Sir,” said Daly, with a face of the most imperturbable gravity; “ all that would be perfectly unavailing. The decision as to the line rests entirely with me; and, as I said to Mr.

Higgins, my assistant,—Higgins,” continued he, calling me to him, “let me present you to Sir Timothy Dod,—I said to Higgins, what a pity it would be to disturb the Dods,—what a cut at their comforts;—it goes against my heart to send in the plan, but the line is so decidedly the shortest. ‘ Ah, Sir !’ says Higgins to me, with a deep sigh, ‘ I assure you,—“ but *do* consider the conservatory.” ’

“ I’m sure, Sir,” said Sir Timothy, extending his hand to me, “ I feel very grateful for your kindness. It would indeed be a sad thing; and must the decision be made so soon ?”

“ Immediately, Sir,” said Daly: “ but we are keeping you out here in the open air without your hat. I am afraid, Sir, you may catch cold.”

“ Oh, no, Sir,” said Sir Timothy; “ don’t mind that. Perhaps, gentlemen, you would do me the kindness to walk in. The servants shall take care of your boat. I will introduce you to Lady Dod, she must try what *her* influence can effect, and I am sure you have the disposition to serve

us. Here, Philip, James, George, some of you, come and make this boat fast, and stay down by her while the gentlemen stop. Let me show you the way, gentlemen."

I never shall forget the look which Daly gave me as we followed the respectable knight to his lady and family,—the triumphant chuckle of his countenance, the daring laugh in his eyes; while I, who only saw in the success of the design the beginning of a signal defeat, scarce knew whether I was walking on my head or my heels: resistance or remonstrance was equally vain under the circumstances, and in a few minutes we found ourselves in the presence of Lady Dod and her daughters, breathing an atmosphere redolent with the fumes of the departed dinner, and the still remaining fruit and wine. I never was so abashed in my life. My friend, on the contrary, seemed perfectly at home; and, placing himself beside her Ladyship, made a sign for me to occupy a vacant seat between the young ladies. Never did I see two more lovely girls.

It has frequently been a serious matter of

deliberation with me, whether it is more advantageous to be next neighbour, or *vis-à-vis*, to an object of attraction, such as either of these charming creatures was. I sat between them, as Garrick stands between Tragedy and Comedy, in the profane theatrical monument which some superannuated or careless Dean of other days has permitted to disgrace and desecrate the walls of Westminster Abbey. Augusta Dod was a *brunette*, with a countenance full of expression and intelligence. Fanny Dod a *blonde*, with melting blue eyes, and a pair of lips that, spite of my feigned occupation, I could not help gazing at in a manner of which I believe I ought to have been very much ashamed. The young witches soon saw the effect of their fascination, and I could perceive in the sparkle of Augusta's brilliant orbs, and the intellectual, but saucy expression of her playful mouth, that they triumphed in “astonishing a native,” even in the shape of an acting deputy assistant surveyor's clerk.

The courtesy of Sir Timothy, the sweetness

of my Lady, and the constrained fun of the girls, were, I admit, when I recovered my composure in some degree, a great treat; while Daly, "helping himself and passing the bottle" to *me*, kept up a fire of conversation, which, if the senior Dods had known anything of the world, would have convinced them in ten minutes that the part of acting deputy assistant measurer was an assumed one. It certainly was a sight to see the respectable lady of the house pleading the cause of her conservatory, and piling the choicest fruits upon the plate of the arbiter of her destinies, while Fanny's civilities to me were displayed with equal zeal and far superior grace. I would have given the world to have owned the truth; and I am sure, if we had done so, we should not have been the worse received; for, independently of the excellence of the joke and the impudence of the proceeding, the relief which would have been afforded to the minds of the whole Doddery would have ensured us their eternal favour and affection.

Daly having finished the claret, and taken a

last “stopper over all,” (as the sailors say), of sherry, gave me the signal for departure. I, too gladly took the hint, and drew back my chair. Fanny looked as if she thought we were in a hurry; however, it was getting late, and my master had some distance to pull. We accordingly rose and prepared to take leave. I bowed my adieu to the girls, and shook hands with Fanny, at which I saw Augusta toss back her head and throw up her sparkling eyes, as much as to say, “Well, Fanny!” meaning exactly the reverse. I bowed low to my Lady Dod, and Sir Timothy attended us to our boat. I stepped in; Daly was at the bow; Sir Timothy desired the man who had been left in charge of the funny to go away; and then I saw, with doubt and trepidation, the respectable dupe of Daly’s consummate impudence shake him by the hand with a peculiarity of manner which particularly attracted my attention. I saw him in the execution of this manœuvre press upon his palm a bank-note, with a flourish in the corner like the top of a raspberry tartlet.

I never was more agitated. If Daly took this bribe for saving the corner of the conservatory it was an act of swindling. The strawberries, grapes, and claret, were fit matters of joke, although I admit it was carrying the joke a little too far; but money,—if he took *that*, I was resolved to avow the whole affair to Sir Timothy, show up my companion, and leave him to the fate he deserved. Judge my mingled delight and horror when I heard him say,—

“Sir! what I have done in your house or in your society to induce you to believe me capable of taking a bribe to compromise my duty, I really don’t know. Mr. Higgins, I call you to witness that this person has had the insolence to put a fifty-pound bank-note into my hand. Witness, too, the manner in which I throw it back to him.” Here he suited the word to the action. “Learn, old gentleman,” continued he, with an anger so well feigned that I almost believed him in earnest, “that neither fifty nor fifty thousand pounds will warp an honest man from the duty he owes to his employers; and so,

Sir, good night, and rely upon it, your conservatory goes,—rely upon it, Sir Timothy;—It comes in the right line, and the short line, and down it goes—and I feel it incumbent on me not only to tell the history of your petty bribe, but to prove my unimpeachable integrity by running the canal right under your dining-room windows; and so, Sir, good night.”

Saying which he jumped into the boat, and pulling away manfully, left his unfortunate victim in all the horrors of defeated corruption, and the certainty of the destruction of his most favourite object, for the preservation of which he had actually crammed his betrayers, and committed himself to a perfect stranger.

I confess I regretted the termination of this adventure as much as I had apprehended its consequences in the beginning; however, Daly swore that it was right to leave the old gentleman in an agony of suspense for having entertained so mean an idea of his honour and honesty.

The thing seemed all like a dream, but

I found myself awake when Daly ran the narrow nose of his boat into the nook at Teddington Church, where I landed; and having shaken my extraordinary friend by the hand, proceeded to my mother's villa, while he continued his pull up to Hampton Court, at which place, as he told me, he had been staying a few days, and intended to remain two or three more.

CHAPTER IV.

THE voyager long pent up within the “wooden walls” of a ship, feels a sensation upon once again walking the “lean earth,” which cannot be adequately described to one who has not experienced it. I confess, although the nature of the effect produced upon me when I stepped from Mr. Daly’s “funny” was of course perfectly different in its character, yet as far as the relief afforded me, it was almost equally pleasurable. It seemed to me that I had escaped from some incarnate fiend, whose whole existence was devoted to what he called fun, but which I could not but consider absolute and unqualified

mischief; and as I walked onwards to my mother's villa, I seriously revolved the events of the day in my mind, at the same time forming a resolution never again to subject myself to the domination of a practical joker, although my new friend had given me a pressing invitation to visit him at Hampton Court, where he had so recently established himself, and of which sedate and aristocratic neighbourhood he would, as I suspected, soon become, even by his own showing, the terror and affright.

It was a beautiful evening when I reached the gate of Mrs. Gurney's cottage, the mere sight of which recalled all the misfortunes of the previous night to my mind. The striking contrast afforded by the quiet aspect of the villa, the well-mown lawn, the gently waving trees, and the gay beds of flowers, to that of the house in which I had been but twenty-four hours before eternally disgraced as a dramatist, went to my heart; while the parterre, full of roses, and pinks, and geraniums, gently bowing their heads and smelling sweetly, exhibited so refreshing a

“reverse” to the parterre of the Haymarket, with its “greasy citizens.” and yelling apprentices, that all my regrets burst upon me in a flood of remorse and sorrow, and found utterance in one exclamation of “how *could* I be such a fool!”

It was however necessary that I should summon all my resolution to bear the reproaches with which I knew I was destined to be assailed, if the news of my exposure had preceded me. In vain I hoped that my respectable parent might not have seen a newspaper, for I recollect that my servant, although not entirely informed of my share in the entertainment of the preceding evening, had made himself master of so much of my secret as would serve to enlighten Mrs. Sadler, my mother’s maid, of whose disposition to find out whatever he was unable to explain, I had no doubt; once the clue given, and the train lighted, the explosion was a matter of certainty.

Full of contending feelings, somewhat excited by the rapid consumption of Sir Timothy’s

claret and sherry, I entered the cottage, and found, as I had anticipated, my excellent parent seated at tea, opposite to her never-failing friend and companion, Crab.

“Dear child,” said my excellent parent,—and she would have called me child had she lived till I was forty,—“what on earth has kept you at Richmond so late? Have you dined? or ——.”

“Dined? hours ago,” replied I, rather too hastily, considering it to have been my intention not to confess the company in which I had passed the day.

“Theatricals again, Gilbert!” said my mother, with a sigh.

How the deuce did she know that?

“You were coming *here* to pass the day, but the fascination of those syrens of the stage was irresistible—we waited dinner nearly an hour for you.”

“More, Ma’am,” said Miss Crab: “the lamb was stone cold, and the fish boiled to pieces.”

"I am extremely sorry," said I, "but I told William that I should not be here until the evening."

"He misunderstood you then," said my mother; "not that I should have waited at all if I had known who were your associates. I am quite aware of the attractions of such society."

My mother was evidently vexed, and knowing as little of the qualities or accomplishments of my fair friends at Richmond, as she did of the syrens to whom she likened them, imagined them, as I believe, to be something quite as extraordinary as the well-fledged daughters of Achelous; and no doubt transformed the ayte opposite Mrs. Forty's excellent inn into the little Sicilian island which the classical leash of ornithological beauties occupied in other times. If I could have explained the real cause of my late arrival it would have all been extremely well, but I would not for the world have ventured to confess to my most exemplary parent, more especially in the presence of the fair vinaigrette "she loved so much," the adventure at Twick-

enham. I therefore resolved upon bowing my head to the coming storm, and without attempting to vindicate the character or qualities of my merry-hearted companions at the Castle, endeavouring to soothe the ladies with an humble apology.

As for my mother, with great shrewdness and knowledge of the world, she blended a remarkably sweet temper, but her constant association with Miss Crab appeared to me latterly to have somewhat acidulated her character. This officious aide-de-camp was always ready to throw in the sours; and from having arrived at the unmentionable age of fifty-six, without having changed her state of single-unblessedness, all the kindness of her nature had curdled, and, as people say, every thing went wrong with her—*couleur de rosé* was a tint unknown to her eyes—every thing was jaundiced—she was full of jealousy, without one grain of love to compensate for her failing; and to *her* influence, more than anything else, I attributed my mother's apparent ill-humour upon the present occasion.

“ Will you have some coffee, Gilbert?” said my mother.

“ None, I thank you,” said I.

“ Some tea?”

“ None.”

“ Oh dear, no,” said Miss Crab, “ dissipated people never drink such weak liquors as tea or coffee.”

“ You seem,” said I, “ to have formed a very unfavourable and somewhat erroneous opinion of *my* character, Miss Crab; I am not conscious of having deserved to be called dissipated, nor do I know that I have either denounced tea or renounced coffee.”

“ I am sure I don’t know,” said the lady, “ but this I do know, that actors, and actresses too, are invariably drunkards, profaners, and Sabbath-breakers. When I was a few years younger, and secretary to a very well-conducted Vice-suppression Society at Peckham, we actually ascertained that a man of the name of Pluggs, the husband of an exemplary and ill-treated laundress of that place, was known to

have gone on the evening of the Sabbath to Covent-garden playhouse to which he belonged, and put on a pair of feather trowsers and a wooden nose, in order to rehearse the part of a goose which he had to act in a pantomime, the next night."

"Well," said I, "at all events he had the excuse of his poverty for making himself a goose, which the coterie who criticised him had *not*."

"Oh, I quite agree with Miss Crab," said my mother, "there is no defending the thing; and joking with serious subjects is extremely offensive."

I found the odds were against me. I therefore made no reply, satisfied at all events that the intelligence of my defeat as a dramatist had not yet reached Teddington.

"I hope," said my mother, "that you are come to stay with us for two or three days?"

"Not *he*, Ma'am," said Miss Crab.

I could almost have found it in my heart to declare my intention of stopping a fortnight, merely to vex her.

“ I have no engagement in town,” said I.

“ Well, then, Miss Crab,” said my mother,
“ I think we may let him into our scheme.”

“ Probably.”

“ What,” said I, “ a plot against me?”

“ A plot for your happiness,” said my mother.
“ If you will but attend to us ——”

“ I have no hope of *that*,” said Miss Crab.

“ What is it?” said I ; “ an immediate voyage
to India, or a fresh touch at the law?”

“ Neither Gilbert,” said my mother ; “ but
much more agreeable than either.” “ Miss Crab
and I *have* seen—haven’t we, Miss Crab?”

“ I think we have,” replied Miss Crab.

“ Such a charming girl,” said my mother.

“ Two,” cried her friend.

“ Yes, but the younger one is *my* favourite,”
said Mrs. Gurney ; she *is* so gentle, so mild, so
amiable, so pretty, and so good!”

“ Well,” said I, “ and what then?”

“ Oh, Ma’am,” said Miss Crab, “ its all of
no use talking to Gilbert about such sort of
people. A young gentleman who spends his

time with actresses has no taste—*can* have no taste—for the gentler attributes of women, nor appreciate the qualities which, in well-regulated society, render their influence so powerful and beneficial.”

“I don’t know that, Miss Crab,” said my mother; “I don’t think he is yet irredeemable, and I am quite sure if anything could draw him back into the right path the charms of our dear Fanny——”

“Oh!” said I, “a pretty girl is what you prescribe as a sedative.”

“As an alterative, Mr. Gilbert,” said Miss Crab.

“But you don’t seriously mean,” said I, “that I should turn Benedick before I have arrived at years of discretion?”

“I am an advocate of early marriages,” said my mother.

“So am I,” said Miss Crab (*ætat.* 56), drawing a sigh as long as the thread with which she was working.

“ And who may this paragon of perfection be ? ” said I.

“ A neighbour of ours,” said my mother ; “ there are two sisters, both delightful persons ; but Fanny—is to *me* quite charming.”

“ We must not say too much about them,” said Miss Crab, “ or Gilbert will be disappointed ; nor will we tell him which is Fanny, and which her sister—he shall judge for himself. All we have to observe Mr. Gilbert,” continued Miss Crab, “ is that they have fifty thousand pounds apiece.”

“ Equal then in *that* respect,” said I ; “ and when shall I see these fair creatures ? ”

“ They are coming to me, to-morrow,” said my mother ; “ so that you will not have long to wait before you may gratify your curiosity.”

“ And what may their name be ? ” I inquired.

“ The name is not euphonic,” answered my mother.

“ The stronger the reason for changing it,” said I.

“ Try that scheme,” said my anxious parent ; “ at present they rejoice in the monosyllabic patronymic of Dod.”

“ Dod !” exclaimed I.

“ Dod,” said my mother.

“ Dod,” said Miss Crab.

“ What,” said I, “ daughters of Sir Timothy Dod, of Twickenham ?”

“ The same,” said Mrs. Gurney ; “ do you know them ?”

What was I to say? I did know them, and I did not know them—I had sat between them an hour before—drank wine with them—shaken hands with one of them—but under what circumstances ? I felt justified in saying “ No.” It was truth to a certain extent, and if I had attempted to give the entire truth, and nothing but the truth, it would have involved me in the confession of an adventure, of which, though, I had escaped with a whole skin, I was by no means proud.

“ They live,” said my mother, “ in that large house on the banks of the river, with the fine conservatory.”

Yes, thought I, *that* conservatory which is to come down, to make room for a branch of the Paddington Canal.

“Lady Dod is a great botanist,” continued my dear unconscious mother; “and Fanny——”

“Is a great beauty,” interrupted Miss Crab; “a *leetel* on one side I think, but that’s not to be wondered at; I remember hearing Sir Everard Home say that nine women out of ten were more or less so.”

“Well,” said my mother, “let Gilbert judge for himself; Fanny seems to me to be the most likeable and loveable person I ever saw.”

“Is Fanny the one with the beautiful hair?” said I, like a fool.

“Yes,” said my mother.

“Why, la,” said Miss Crab, laying down her work, and looking me full in the face over the candle; “how do *you* know anything about her beautiful hair, if you know nothing of the girls?”

“Me,” said I; “why you talked about her beautiful hair yourself;” not that she had, but luckily for me, the confident manner in which I

made the assertion, induced her to believe she had, and she was for the moment satisfied.

To me this affair was in the highest degree perplexing. The girls were charming—the opportunity of making their acquaintance favourable and inviting. Although my heart even then was, perhaps, not mine to give, and love altogether out of the question, still, their society would have made the shades of Teddington, Elysium; and here was I, driven by the rash imprudence of my slight acquaintance, Daly, to fly them, to shun them, and to decamp on their approach, not only to the detriment of my own happiness, but to the vexation of my anxious parent, whose whole heart was ardently set upon making a *partie*, and who would attribute my flight from the maternal roof to a distaste for the pleasing calm of retirement, or to an addiction to grosser pleasures and less refined pursuits; and yet, what was to be done? the moment they saw me they would of course recognize in the son of their much-respected neighbour the obsequious Higgins, measuring

clerk to the deputy assistant surveyor of the Paddington Canal Company. If our expedition and invasion of Sir Timothy's lawn and house had ended civilly, I should have had little scruple in admitting the joke, deprecating the anger of the young ladies, and trusting to their love of fun for pardon; but as the catastrophe was any thing but agreeable to their venerable papa, and as that worthy gentleman had fallen under the lash of Mr. Daly's practical satire, I did not see the possibility of patching up anything like peace. The *dénouement* was not to be risked; I therefore, contented myself with listening to the praises of the beautiful sisters, and expressing the great pleasure I should have in making their acquaintance, at the same time, resolving in my own mind to be up with the lark, and in London to breakfast.

In those days of ingenuousness, I was not able, even though I might have wished it, to conceal the real feelings by which I was affected, although, as in this instance, their workings might be frequently misinterpreted.

My mother exchanged a look with Miss Crab which I perfectly understood: it conveyed to me at once the certainty that my excellent parent was satisfied that something was wrong; and as by the perpetual counsellings of her her companion, she had made up her mind that I was going in a hand-canter—or perhaps, I should rather say by the *stage*—on the road to ruin, it was evident that the dear soul attributed to some prior engagement the cold and uncomfortable manner in which I responded to the beautiful inspirations about a lovely girl and fifty thousand pounds. Little did they think what my real feelings were—how much shame I felt at Daly's pranks, and what regret I experienced that I could not venture to meet the two dear victims of his most unjustifiable frolic. However, my miseries were only beginning; for just as I had listened my companions into a calm, and heard a detail of all the perfections of the two Miss Dods, in walked the footman, and going up to my mother, said,

“ Miss Marshall’s compliments, Ma’am, she has sent you the newspaper;” at the same moment placing in her hands the “Morning Post” of the day.

My mother made her acknowledgments, and I endeavoured to avail myself of the opportunity of being very civil and offered to read it to her. I saw it was not the paper I had seen in the morning, and anticipated some more dreadful criticisms upon my unhappy farce—but no—my mother declared that she could not endure to hear the newspaper read, and that she would look at it herself; saying which, she forthwith proceeded to read the births, deaths, and marriages, and one or two advertisements about bonnets and caps, and then, having turned with cordial and candid disgust from some long article upon the state of affairs in general, she threw the popular journal upon the table, and resumed her work.

Miss Crab—always active—immediately took it up, and began in an audible voice to do that which my respected parent had just declared

she disliked so much, and doled out, with a sort of melancholy twang, sundry pieces of much important intelligence: *e. g.*

“ Captain and Mrs. Hobkirk arrived on Tuesday at the Bath Hotel, Piccadilly, from Cheltenham.

“ We understand that Sir Robert Hitchcock is expected next Tuesday at his house in Curzon-street, May-fair.

“ We are requested to contradict the report of Miss Hall’s approaching marriage with Mr. Wetherspoon. It originated in the malicious contrivance of a person who will not long remain concealed.

“ The wind in Hyde Park yesterday was uncommonly high; the equestrians, however, mustered strongly. Amongst the most striking equipages we noticed the new carriage of Lady Ann Stiffkey, built by Chamberlain and Co., Liquorpond-street, Gray’s Inn-lane.

“ Mrs. Huffy Buggins entertained a select party at dinner yesterday, at her house in Portman-square; among the company we noticed

Lord Daudle, the Right Honourable John Gumdum and Mrs. Gumdum, Sir Anthony Bumpus and Lady, Mr. Gardner, Mr. Hogg, and Mr. Dilbury Maggenton.

“ Pink is the prevailing colour for the season; we observed in Kensington Gardens last Sunday a bonnet peculiarly becoming; it did not require a second glance to know that it was of the *fabrique* of Madame Boss Tickner, of Hanover-street.

“ An event has occurred in a certain noble family, not a hundred miles from Berkeley-square, which will cause some employment for the gentlemen of the long robe.

“ EPIGRAM.

“ It seems as if nature had curiously plann'd,
That men's names with their trades should agree,
There's Twining the Tea-man, who lives in the Strand,
Would be *whining* if robb'd of his T.

“ ON THE LATIN GERUNDS.

“ When Dido's spouse to Dido would not come,
She mourn'd in silence, and was DI, DO, DUMB !”

All these witticisms, and truisms, and follies, and platitudes, I patiently bore; they fell upon

my tympanum, from Miss Crab's lips, as might the sound of wind down the chimney, for I was completely absorbed in the regret I felt at the absolute necessity which existed for my avoiding the girls, with whom an acquaintance would have been so particularly agreeable; but my abstraction was very speedily ended, and my heart set beating, by hearing Miss Crab, in a somewhat louder tone than usual, twang out the following :—

“ THEATRE.

“ Last night afforded us the opportunity of witnessing the justly-merited condemnation of one of the most contemptible attempts at a farce, with which the manager of a play-house ever ventured to insult the public. From the moment the curtain rose, until it fell amidst the yells of a disgusted audience, we could not detect one line or word calculated to moderate the disapprobation with which the thing was received. The incidents—if incidents they may be called—are stolen from the French, and the

dialogue from the oldest editions of Joe Miller. It was, indeed, painful to see good actors and actresses doomed to repeat such absurdities. The audience were wonderfully patient, but everything in this world must wear out; and accordingly the second act proving, if possible, worse than the first, forbearance was at an end, and the whole house rose to hoot the nuisance from the stage.

“ This most beautiful example of modern authorship is, we are told, from the pen of a young gentleman of the name of Gurney, a law-student. If he should ever come to be a judge, it must be of something else than literature; for, without one redeeming point, his farce combined dulness, indelicacy, ignorance of society, a total want of knowledge of character, and what may, perhaps, be worse in the present state of the drama, entire ignorance of the peculiar qualities of the actors. We trust that the dunce will drive his quill in some other direction than that of the stage, and that we shall never again be kept from a comfortable party at home, to wit-

ness the representation of a second effort from the same quarter."

"What do you mean, Miss Crab?" said my mother. "Mr. Gurney, a law-student—you are joking?"

"I never joke, Ma'am," said Miss Crab.

"Now, Gilbert, explain," said my parent, with highly erected eyebrows, "are *you* the person meant in this odious newspaper—have you really disgraced yourself by putting into execution the crude and absurd ideas you admitted you had formed of writing a farce—tell me—without evasion or equivocation?"

I saw that the blood of the Gatakers had mounted to her cheeks, and recollecting the precautionary letter she had written me on the subject, I felt that I wished Miss Marshall at Jericho for sending in the newspaper, Miss Crab at Botany Bay for having read it, and myself anywhere but where I was.

"My dear mother," said I, "when you were good enough to express your opinions upon the subject of my dramatic authorship, I made no

promise—I was guilty of no evasion or equivocation. I told you *then* that, let me take what course I might, I never would do anything to disgrace myself or my family."

"And how have you kept that promise?" exclaimed my mother; "by directly flying in the face of my wishes and entreaties, and bringing out a farce at the summer theatre, which——"

"——Has been damned Ma'am," exclaimed Miss Crab, with a force and energy which made me feel that if she were to experience a similar fate I should not very much care.

"Exactly so," rejoined my mother; "if it had succeeded——"

"The fault," interrupted I, "would have been just the same."

"As far as regards your disobedience to me," said my mother;—"Yes,—as far as regards your own reputation—No."

"To be sure not," chimed in Miss Crab, pursing herself up and chuckling and turning her head round first one way and then another.

"And then"—exclaimed my distressed parent.

“I know what you are going to say Mrs. Gurney,” screamed her dear companion.

“One at a time,” cried I, and the noise at *this* time was prodigious; both ladies had opened on me at once, which aroused the two little dogs on the carpet, who began barking, upon which the three cock canary birds immediately began singing with all their might and main. “One would think that I had committed some heinous offence;” bawled I, at the top of my voice, “I have only done what hundreds of gentlemen have done before me; and as for the failure, that cannot be helped—many a better farce has been cut short in its career in a similar manner—nipped in the bud.”

“Only to burst out again next spring, I fear,” said Mrs. Gurney.

“You may be sure of *that*, Ma’am,” said Miss Crab; “once the propensity gets hold of a man, his pen never keeps still—scribble—scribble—scribble.”

“There you are mistaken,” said I. “I have committed a fault—that I admit; but it is not

ever likely to be repeated. If I had met with the success the absence of which you so much regret, I might have been tempted to try again; but the first round of the ladder to fame having snapped under my feet, I shall give it up, and turn to something else."

"Fame, indeed," said my mother! "the idea of the fame of a farce-writer—while, with common application, the Bench or the Woolsack is open to you—the notion of wasting your time in composing folly for fools to repeat, for the amusement of fools greater than themselves."

"Upon this occasion, Ma'am," said Miss Crab, with a diabolical smile of self-satisfaction, "the audience were not such great fools as to listen."

"Thank you, Miss Crab," said I, "you are adding pepper to the seasoning of the newspaper critic. I tell you all preachings and lectures are useless——"

"That I truly believe," said Miss Crab.

"For this reason, that I am as firmly resolved never to attempt another dramatic work, as I am

not to study the law, for which I have neither turn nor ability, and my devotion to which would be a much more ridiculous farce in real life, than that of the mimic world which was last night so unceremoniously driven from the stage."

"I see how it is," said my respected parent, "you want to break my heart."

"My dear mother!" said I.

"No matter," said my mother, "I shall not be here to trouble you long: surely the little time I have to live, I might see you pursuing a career, the termination of which might render you happy and honourable!"

"I thought, my dear mother," said I, "that let what might happen to either of us, you had so far reconciled yourself to losing *me*, that you were actually waiting only to learn a little more of my brother Cuthbert's plans, to ship me off to Calcutta."

"Ship you off, my child," said my mother, whose earnestness for my respectability, and my preservation from all the evils of dissipation into which she feared my present pursuits and

connexions would lead me, induced her to propose what she sincerely felt to be a great sacrifice; “you do me an injustice by using such an expression. I would rather do anything than part with you.”

“Rely upon it,” said Miss Crab, “it is the best thing you *can* do—save him from destruction, and make him a rich man into the bargain.”

“And lose his society for ever,” said my kind parent.

“You have not much of it as it is, Ma’am, I think,” said Miss Crab.

“While my mother is so happy to have *you* as a companion,” said I, “*my* presence can be little needed here; indeed,” continued I, “it seems to me as if my appearance under this roof was the signal for discord and confusion. I am perfectly content to hear the advice, and even bear the reproaches of a parent when I merit them, but I really do not see what right—”

“Come, come, dear Gilbert,” said my mother, “do not speak angrily—we all mean for the best.”

“Yes, I’m sure *I* do,” said Miss Crab; “but advice to young folks who *will* have their own way is not always agreeable—medicine, however salutary, is seldom palatable.”

“What I mean to say then, is this,” said I: “I have no turn for the law—I know it would be folly in me to attempt it—I am quite satisfied to live upon my allowance—I owe no debts—I am not likely to incur any—but if my mother is of opinion that a life of idle independence is not desirable, then, I repeat, I am ready to start whenever she pleases to my brother, according to her desire.”

“Having previously prepared yourself in a mercantile house in the city,” said Miss Crab.

I confess I had a great mind to quarrel with the matured virgin for her constant interference in my schemes and arrangements, not only because I was really irritated at what appeared to me to be her vast presumption on my mother’s kindness, but because it was absolutely necessary I should somehow “get up” a grievance in the course of the evening, upon the strength of

which I might retire in dudgeon early in the morning, so as to avoid the presence of the two fair Dods, whom, of all girls in the world, my anxious mother most particularly wished me to meet.

I was a good deal worried about this little *contretemps*, which went a great way to impress upon my mind the truth of the saying, which since has become indelibly stamped there, that “wrong never comes right.” As I have already said, the foolish trick in which I had been involved that evening had rendered it impossible for me to look the gentle victims of our hoax in the face, or permit them to look in mine. I was quite sure my absence would be attributed by my parent—if not in the first instance, certainly at the suggestion of her most unamiable companion—to a resolute opposition to her wishes, and, in all probability, to the existence of some *tendresse* in another quarter, or some clandestine connexion of a less respectable character; but what could I do? I asked myself this question once or twice during what the sailors call a

“lull” in the storm of discussion, and I should have been glad either to have answered it satisfactorily, or to have found it the only one I had to put; unluckily, there was another which cut me even deeper than the first. How came I involved in the surveying affair?—by an association with one of those agreeable *vauriens* of whom my excellent parent had such a violent, and, as I used to think, needless dread.

Here, however, in this one instance, I could neither impugn nor gainsay her apprehensions. If I had not written the farce I should not have known the actors,—if I had not known the actors I could not have joined them at Richmond,—if I had not joined them at Richmond I should not have made the acquaintance of Mr. Daly,—and if I had not have made his acquaintance I should have ridden quietly home to my mother’s cottage, have enjoyed her society without rebuke or reproach, and the next morning have been presented to two lovely and amiable young women, with one of whom, even situated as I

was, I might have formed, at some future period, a happy and honourable alliance.

“After all,” thought I, “my mother is right;” but, as if Old Nick had set his hoof in it, it was the only occasion I could recollect upon which I was unable to admit her to be so; and thus, adding hypocrisy to undutifulness, I combated her arguments, which, in fact, convinced me; opposed suggestions which I was satisfied were admirable, and closed an uncomfortable evening by going to bed in an unamiable fit of assumed anger.

After I had retired to my room I heard the two ladies holding converse rather long than gentle. It struck me that my mother was taking my part against the vindictive malignity of her ill-conditioned friend, whose anxious desire for my departure for India I was base enough to attribute to a desire on her part to get entire possession of my excellent mother during her life, and of her property after her death; and more than once I had resolved to open my heart

to my mother and communicate my thoughts and suspicions. However, for the present, the “evil of the day” was sufficient to encounter, and the only question which remained unsettled in my mind was whether I should get away as I first proposed to myself before breakfast, or breakfast with the ladies, pretend an engagement in town, and so depart about eleven.

Upon mature deliberation, I determined upon an early flight: there could then be no remonstrances, no explanations, no pressings or insistings,—no demurrings, or evasions. I therefore wrote a note before I went to bed, and ordered my servant to have the horses at the stable gate by eight o’clock. The note too was unworthy of me. I pleaded the unpleasantness of useless discussions at the cause of my sudden departure, and expressed a perfect readiness to return and accommodate myself to my mother’s wishes whenever she was prepared to receive me with less harshness than she had exhibited that evening. Thus evil upon evil seemed to accumulate. It would vex her gentle nature to think she had

wounded my feelings, and she would worry herself at my absence. Yet without some cause I could not have gone; and thus, as one falsehood invariably begets another, one meanness produced more, and I condescended to sneak out of my mother's house under false pretences, in order to avoid being detected in an unwarrantable proceeding, contrived and carried into effect by one of my new theatrical connexions.

I did not feel satisfied with these results, and I think I slept worse than I otherwise should, considering that I had undergone much fatigue, mental and bodily, during the day, and that I had scarcely closed my eyes the night before, while my heart was full of the martyrdom of my favourite Sir Jeffery. I arose stealthily and noiselessly before my note could be conveyed to my mother's room by her maid, and by half-past eight found myself journeying back to town, less composed, and more unsettled than I ever recollect ed to have been before.

For a narrative of the events which occurred after my departure I am indebted to a letter

from my excellent parent, upon whose mind they were impressed with an almost indelible severity: a letter which, as will hereafter be seen, was rendered by circumstances deeply and painfully interesting.

Breakfast ready, and Miss Crab waiting; down came my mother with my note in her hand.

“Good morning,” said Miss Crab. “I was down before you, waiting to take a turn round the shrubbery with Gilbert, and prepare his mind for the beauties he is to see at luncheon.”

“You would have lost your labour had you waited till luncheon-time itself,” said my mother.
“Gilbert is gone to town.”

“To town!” exclaimed Miss Crab. “Umph! That is strange. What reason does he give for running away from the treat we have proposed for him?”

“I don’t know,” said Mrs. Gurney, “that he is altogether wrong in his feelings; but I am quite sure I know what those feelings are. He

thinks that whatever right *I* may have to question and even censure his conduct when I think it faulty, a second person—not a relation, and having, no legitimate control over him—has *none* ;—in fact, my belief is, that he is worried and vexed by your interference.”

“ Mine, Ma’am !” said Miss Crab ; “ really I did not expect this. You have been most candid and confidential in all your communications about your son to me ; and I thought, after the observations you had made, that I was supporting you in your endeavours to keep him right, at your own special desire.”

“ I do not, in the slightest degree,” said my mother, “ impugn your intentions or doubt your anxiety, Miss Crab ; but *he* feels that your support generally has the effect of heightening whatever fault of his is under discussion, and of urging me to a severity which he does not believe to be natural to my character.”

“ Oh ! well, Ma’am,” said Miss Crab, “ I have done. Let him follow his own inclina-

tions,—let him go upon the stage or upon the highway, which, in my mind, is little worse;—rely upon it, Ma'am, I will never say another syllable.”

“ My dear Miss Crab,” said my mother, who was, with respect to our quarrels, something like what a wife is to a husband,—she did not care how much she scolded me herself, but was very tetchy if any third person attempted to assail me—“ My dear Miss Crab, what extraordinary ideas, and how strangely expressed ! Gilbert is wild and thoughtless, and idle, and giddy, and, unfortunately, addicted to pursuits which perhaps may be unprofitable, but certainly not dishonourable. He dislikes the law, and shrinks from trade.”

“ Oh, to be sure he does !” said Miss Crab ; “ and of course it is all quite right. If I had known what his determinations were, and how he was to be upheld in them, I certainly should not have made a very considerable effort to speak to Mr. Yellowly, of the firm of Curry, Raikes, Yellowly, Lefevre, and Co.,

in his behalf. Now, that I understand how my advice and suggestions are received, I shall venture them no longer. As for this morning, my belief is, that his reason for going away is the coming hither of the two Miss Dods: rely upon it, living as he is, and has been for some time past, he has formed some *liaison*, which, if it does not definitively prevent his forming a respectable matrimonial connexion, gives him, at least for the present, a distaste for any other society. I saw his restlessness and agitation the moment you mentioned that your young and virtuous visitors were expected."

" We must not be too fastidious: no, nor too inquisitive," said my mother. " Recollect that our conversation about our fair neighbours and the probability of the results of this interview were jokes;—that nothing upon earth could be much more improbable than that a casual visit here should lead to an union between one of the young ladies and my son."

" Improbable!" said Miss Crab, " nothing *more* probable! Everything must have a be-

ginning, and *my* creed is, that young ladies who are over-fastidious are not over-wise."

This was what Daly would have called a "bad shot," for either Miss Crab had, by her own showing, been extremely unwise, or had never been asked. My mother perceived the slip, but was too amiable and too well-bred to take advantage of it.

"What I mean to say, my dear Miss Crab," said my mother, "is, that in spite of all the follies and indiscretions of which Gilbert, at twenty years of age, may be guilty, I am quite sure that he would neither sacrifice himself in a mercenary marriage, nor form an acquaintance or connexion likely to turn out disgracefully."

"Well, Ma'am," said Miss Crab, "enjoy your own opinion. I know the difficulty of persuading parents upon particular points; however, you may rely upon it that your son's absence this morning is not owing to anything that I have either said or done to annoy him —time, perhaps, will show who is right."

“ I am content to let it rest there,” said my mother ; and having thus made peace, she proceeded to make tea, not, however, without an observation from Miss Crab as to the water being quite cold in consequence of having stood so long upon the table, the flame under the urn having been, in consequence of the carelessness of the servant, out for the last ten minutes.

Poor Miss Crab, let the subject be what it might, always contrived to drop her little contribution of acid into the cup ; and yet my mother had become so used to her, and so convinced—which I was not—of her disinterested attachment to her, that although, when I was the object of her varying attacks, she would rally all her energies in my defence, I really believe she liked the excitement produced by her friend’s perpetual and unvarying fault-finding.

The breakfast went on as usual ; there was of course a little too much cream, and much too little sugar, in Miss Crab’s tea ; and the butter was extremely bad for the time of year, when

there was plenty of grass for the cows to eat,—and the raspberries were not ripe,—and the eggs were not so fresh as they might have been,—and so, in all other matters, something was wrong. Yet time and patience conquered these little ills, and a stroll in the grounds, succeeded by writing little notes and doing a little “work,” brought the domesticated couple to within half an hour of the time at which luncheon would be served, and the Misses Dod arrive to partake of it.

At this juncture a smartish ringing at the gate-bell aroused the attention of the ladies, who began putting their faces into the most amiable shape, expecting their sylph-like visitors; but they were somewhat disappointed, and perhaps more surprised, when the servant, throwing open the door, announced “Mr. Daly.”

“Mr. Daly!” said my mother. “Who?”

“Daly!” said Miss Crab. “What?”

“A friend of Mr. Gilbert’s, Ma’am,” said the servant.

“Oh!” said my excellent parent; “pray desire Mr. Daly to walk in.”

The invitation was superfluous, for he had “followed the heels” of the footman so closely, as to be actually in the room before it was completed.

“ I beg ten thousand pardons, Ma’am,” said Daly; “ I believe I have the honour of addressing the mother of my friend Gilbert?” He hit *that* off, happily, by a glance at the mystic badge which my amiable parent exhibited on the third finger of her left hand.

“ I am afraid I am intruding upon your delightful seclusion, but knowing that our dear Gilbert was here last night, it occurred to me that in all probability he would also be here this morning; so, as I am domesticated at Hampton Court, I did hope to persuade him to come over and take a cutlet with me, and meet two or three of the 18th, who, as of course you know, are quartered there.”

“ My son,” said Mrs. Gurney, “ *was* here last night, but went unexpectedly to town this morning before breakfast.”

“ What a delightful person he is, Ma’am!”

said Daly ; “so full of kindness and ingenuousness, and so clever ! The worst of these geniuses is, they seldom have any application—sorry about his farce, poor fellow—however, he does not seem to take it much to heart—met him yesterday at Richmond—pleasant day—pleasant place—pleasant people—do you visit much at Hampton Court, Ma’am ?”

My mother, who was perfectly astounded at the ease and volubility of my “slight acquaintance,”—said “that her visiting-list was a very small one, and that she rarely ventured so far.”

“ I find it uncommon pleasant,” said Daly, “ because the 18th are there—deuced fine fellows, you know, and all that—else it seems dullish. I confess I like having all the parties of Palace people under the same roof—the long passages and the steep staircases—not to speak of ringing Lady Niddynod’s bell, and stuffing a cork into the jet of the fountain—and then to see the Cockneys come to look at the Cartoons, and then to watch them at the Toy —capital fun I have there sometimes, Ma’am,

—locking a whole family of fowls into a bed-room cupboard—the sleeping sight-seers tumble into their beds, and all is hushed and calm as my own conscience—just about daylight, Ma'am, the cock in the closet begins to crow, which sets Mrs. Cock, and all the Miss Cocks into a charm of cackling, which the affrighted innocents from Finsbury-square or St. Mary Axe are as unable to account for as to check; and so from daylight, till they can rouse the servants to their assistance, the inhabitants of the hen-roost, like so many minor Macbeths, ‘murder sleep.’ I call that very good fun, Ma’am.”

“ Mischief *I* call it,” said Miss Crab. “ And pray, Sir, does Mr. Gilbert Gurney participate in such amusements as these?”

“ I never tell tales out of school,” said Daly. “ For myself, I confess I love fun; and only the night before last, being considerably annoyed by a loud snoring in the next room, proceeded to see who was the monster that caused it; there I found a venerable lady, who incauti-

ously slept with her door unfastened, snoring away—‘discoursing,’ as Shakspeare has it—most discordant music with her nose. What d’ye think I did, Ma’am? Ran to my room, burnt the cork of an Eau de Cologne bottle in the candle, returned to the apartment of the sleeping hyena, and gave her a pair of coal-black mustachios, which, when she presented her grim visage to her daughter, who came the first thing in the morning to beg her blessing, threw the young lady into a fit of convulsions, which took Griffinhoof of Hampton three hours and a half to get rid of—that’s fun, or the deuce is in it.”

“ And is it,” said my mother—who sat petrified at the idomitable manner of the wag—“is it to enjoy such jokes as these that you wish my son to join you ?”.

“ Oh, by no means,” said Daly; “ I never involve a friend—never—if I can possibly help it—no, I should like to introduce him to the 18th; and then there are Lord and Lady Griggs, and the Miss Cranbournes, and dear Lady Venerable, the charming Miss Fizzgiggle, and her

very agreeable mother. The delightful Lady Katharine Mango, and her very charming daughter, and the best of all excellent men, a kind-hearted, hospitable East India Captain, the very double of the Lord Chancellor, who has got a pet bird fifteen feet high, with legs like stilts, and a body like a goose. I promise you I will skim the cream of the Court for Gilbert if he will but come—canter to Kingston—migrate to Molesy—saunter to Sunbury—drop in at Ditton—make him acquainted with all the news of the neighbourhood, and place him only second to myself in the estimation of our enlightened and select circle of society.”

It must have been a curious sight to see Daly running on in this free and easy manner, and the two ladies sitting, one beside and the other opposite to him, perfectly thunderstruck by his proceedings, and evidently uncertain what he would next say or do.

“ I like Hampton Court, Ma’am,” continued Daly, without paying the least attention to the astonished countenances of his companions; “ it’s

such a nice distance from town—out of the smoke, and among nice people—Toy, bad inn—landlord *smart* ;—servants not—only one waiter, and he a Goth—I had three friends to dine with me on Tuesday, and what d'ye think happened, Ma'am ? If you recollect, it was vastly hot on Tuesday—glass 82° in the shade—asked if there was any ice—not an ounce in the house—where was the waiter—only conceive, Ma'am, the singularity of the sound, “ *the* waiter,” in an inn half as big as a county hospital—Lawrence was gone to Chertsey—I had no resource—could not wait till he came back—wanted to cool my wine—ordered the maid to get a pail of pump-water, put it in the shade on the leads at the back of the house, and pop into it two bottles of Grave, two of Hock, and two of Champagne—what d'ye think occurred, Ma'am ?”

“ I have no idea,” said Miss Crab, who was at last absolutely provoked into conversation. “ Most likely the girl forgot it.”

“ Not she, Ma'am,” said Daly; “ I'm sure I wish she had. No; she did as she was

bid most punctually. Dinner-time came ; soup served. My friends, Tootle, Bootle, and Sims of the 18th, all seated. I turned to Lawrence, who had just returned from Chertsey, and was standing at the back of my chair, ‘Get a bottle of Hock and a bottle of Grave,’ said I.”

“ ‘Where are they, Sir?’ said he.

“ ‘Oh,’ said I, ‘you’ll find them cooling in a pail of water, in a shady draught of air on the leads.’

“ ‘Very well, Sir,’ says he, and away he goes, and quickly enough he comes back. ‘Pretty job, Sir,’ says Lawrence, with a face like the ghost of Gaffer Thumb—‘Who did *this* for you, Sir?’

“ ‘What?’ said I.

“ ‘Put the Grave and the Hock to cool.’

“ ‘Who?’ said I. ‘Why, Fanny Lanshawe, the chambermaid.’

“ ‘Fanny be —— !’ You’ll excuse my not repeating what he said, Ma’am.—‘She has served you a nice trick, Sir. Look here.’ And sure enough, Ma’am, suiting the action to the word, in he brings the pail, into which the simple

creature had emptied the six bottles of enlivening liquor, and exhibits, to our utter amazement and confusion, three gallons and a half of very weak mixed wine-and-water. These *are* drawbacks, Ma'am, you'll admit; but there must be alloys to everything. For *my* part, nothing damps me—nothing shakes me; I go on laughing along my flowery course, and care for nothing upon earth."

At this moment, in which Daly was boasting of his imperturbable serenity and joyousness, the drawing-room door was again flung open, the servant announced, in an audible voice—"Miss Dod, and Miss Fanny Dod;" and there, before Daly's astonished eyes, stood, in all their native loveliness arrayed, the two accomplished daughters of his last night's victim. They approached, but started back for an instant on recognising their persecutor of the preceding evening so snugly and comfortably domesticated with their new acquaintance at the cottage. The ladies rose to receive their guests, and were just shaking hands, when Daly in a tone of exqui-

site torture, exclaimed, “ Oh my nose !—my nose !” and instantly enveloped his whole countenance in a full-sized silk handkerchief.

“ Dear me !” exclaimed my mother, “ what *is* the matter, Sir ?”

“ A trifle, Ma’am,” said Daly, with his face buried in the bandana. “ A trifle light as air : it’s only my nose, Ma’am—subject to periodical fits of bleeding—after a dreadful fall over a five-barred gate, near Grantham. Don’t mind *me*, Ma’am. I’ll run away; perhaps it mayn’t stop for a fortnight. I won’t worry *you* any longer—I’m off—I’ll plunge my head into the river. Just remember me to Gilbert; say I called; and—O dear, dear—how unlucky ! Adieu —good morning:” saying which, without removing the handkerchief, he bustled out and hurried from the room. Mrs. Gurney, to say truth, was not very sorry to perform the office of ringing the bell, in order that he might have free egress from her peaceful home.

“ What an extraordinary man !” said my mother.

“ Is he mad ?” said Miss Crab.

“ Do you know him well ?” said Fanny Dod.

“ No ; he is an intimate friend of my son’s, I — ”

“ Indeed !” interrupted Miss Dod.

“ Why,” said my mother, “ do *you* know anything of him, Miss Dod ?”

“ No good, I am sure,” said Miss Crab.

“ Why,” said Fanny, “ we know no great harm of him ; only he came to our house last night with his clerk—a much better-behaved person than himself—and frightened us all out of our wits, by threatening to pull down mamma’s dear conservatory.”

“ Pull down a conservatory !” said my mother.

“ Yes, officially,” said Miss Dod.

“ Why, what is he ?” said my mother.

“ A painter and glazier, Ma’am, I dare say,” said Miss Crab.

“ No,” continued Miss Dod. “ You of course know who he is.”

“ Not I,” said my mother. “ He said he was an intimate friend of my son’s, and came to invite him to meet some of the 18th at Hampton Court at dinner to-day.”

“ Yes,” said Miss Crab; “ Tootle, Bootle, and Sims were their names.”

“ There *are* such men in the 18th,” said Fanny Dod. “ The ourang-outang’s name is Tootle, Gussy, is’nt it?”

“ Yes,” said Augusta; “ but I cannot believe that this man can be giving dinners to officers of the 18th.”

“ Why, who and what upon earth is he?” said my mother, getting very anxious to know what her Gilbert’s great crony really was.

“ Oh,” said Fanny, “ there’s no harm in him that we know of; only he was very rude to papa, at last. He came measuring our lawn, in order to ascertain the shortest cut for a canal to Brentford.”

“ And,” said Augusta, “ we behaved as well as possible both to him and his clerk; and yet he vowed vengeance on the corner of the conser-

vatory, and threatened to bring the barge-road close under our bedroom windows."

" Still, you don't say how he could do this, Miss Dod," said my mother.

" Why, I believe he is the Acting Deputy Assistant-Surveyor to the Grand Junction Canal Company," said Augusta ; " and a very forward, presuming, rude gentleman into the bargain."

" And Gilbert's particular friend !" exclaimed my mother.

" Yes, Ma'am," said Miss Crab, in her glory ; " and yet you are quite sure that he never will form an acquaintance or connexion likely to turn out disgracefully."

Luckily at that moment luncheon was announced, and the party proceeded to the breakfast-parlour to partake of it.

Dissatisfied and unsettled as I felt on my way to town, I confess if I could have looked, Asmodeus-like, into the peaceful residence of my respected parent, during this and the preceding scene—as I should have called them—my sensations would have been of a much more serious

and disagreeable character. I never anticipated a visit from Daly at Teddington, and consoled myself by the escape I had made from an interview with the ladies, whose growing intimacy at the cottage must, I foresaw, nevertheless produce an explanation ere long, or act as a prohibition to my visits to my mother. I confess I was perfectly astonished when I heard the details. I had never given him the slightest encouragement to come to the cottage, where I must have been certain his manners, principles, and pursuits would throw its gentle occupants into the highest state of perturbation. My regret when, under the most melancholy circumstances, I ascertained what had occurred was serious indeed; and my resolution never again to make acquaintances *extempore*, was coupled with the conviction that a practical joke is, in fact, no joke at all,—and yet, such is the influence of agreeable manners and lively conversation, that Daly subsequently became my greatest friend, at least in the worldly acceptation of that most equivocal word.

CHAPTER V.

IT is said that a certain place not mentionable to “ears polite” is paved with “good intentions.” Whether it will ever be Macadamized (for that I believe is the term for “unstoning,” now fast gaining ground as I am looking over my papers, which in all probability everybody else will overlook) I cannot pretend to say; but certain it is, that although I was beyond measure mortified by the results of the Twickenham prank, my exclusion from the society of the Miss Dods, and my absolutely necessary escape from an association with them; I was very soon reconciled to my fate after the arrival

of Devil Daly (as I used subsequently to call him) at my lodgings in Suffolk-street.

The instant he had been dislodged from the cottage by the appearance of the young ladies whose family he had so seriously outraged on the previous evening, instead of walking his horse back to Smart's, at the Toy, at Hampton Court, he cantered up to visit me in London ; not so much from any particular affection for me, but because, although himself the victim, there was something so exciting and delightful to him in a joke, that he could not deny himself the pleasure of narrating to me the history of the arrival of the sylphs, and his extraordinary *ruse* of the bleeding nose. I never saw him in higher spirits, and, *quoad* my resolutions, I could not for the life of me refuse to join him in a stroll about town, which, although the season was somewhat advanced, was yet agreeably full, with a pledge to dine with him somewhere afterwards.

In those days clubs were scarce, although *then* hearts were plenty ; there were no clubs of

note at that period but White's, Brookes's, and Boodle's. To be sure, there was the Cocoa Tree, and there was Graham's, but the number of members was small, the system confined, and therefore, although Daly and I were as proud as Lucifer, and as "fine as fine could be," men had no resource when they wished to enjoy the "feast of reason and the flow of soul"—the one in the shape of a cutlet, and the other in the tapering form of a bottle of claret—but to repair to a coffee-house, a place which, I find, is now (I speak while I am arranging my papers) obsolete—a dear nice uncomfortable room, with a bar opening into it, a sanded floor, an argand lamp smoking a tin tray in the middle of its ceiling, boxes along its sides, with hard carpet-covered benches, schoolboy tables, and partitions, with rods, and rings, and curtains, like those of a church-warden's pew in a country church.

I selected Dejex's, at the corner of Leicester-place. Attention and civility, a good *cuisine*, and good wine, formed its particular attractions,

and the courteous attention of “mine host” gave a new zest to his cookery and his claret. I own I love attention and civility—not *that*, which seems to be extracted by dint of money, or by force of the relative situations of guest and landlord,—but that anxious desire to please —that consideration of one’s little peculiarities —and that cheerfulness of greeting, which, even if it be assumed, is always satisfactory. To Dejex’s we resolved to go, and having “secured our box” and taken our stroll, we found ourselves seated and served by a little after six o’clock.

There was something irresistibly, practically engaging about Daly, and I never felt more completely assured of the influence over me of a man with whom I had been so short a time acquainted, as I was when I found myself again—in the course of eight and forty hours—associated with him in a place which of all others was the most likely to afford him some opportunity of exhibiting his eccentricities; for the company consisted in a great degree of *émigrés* of the ancient

régime, who, until the Master hand of Wellington was raised to cut the Gordian knot of their difficulties, which negociation had for years in vain attempted to untwist, England was the asylum for that persecuted race. Yet, however much their misfortunes—the natural results of anarchy and revolution—might excite our sympathies and demand our assistance, some of them, it must be admitted, were to our then unaccustomed eyes extremely strange specimens of humanity; they were what Mr. Daly, in his peculiar phraseology, called “uncommon gigs;” and one very venerable *ci-devant* marquis, who wore spectacles, the said Daly, as he advanced up the room, somewhat too loudly I thought, pronounced to be “a gig with lamps.”

However, we got through dinner and had safely demolished our admirable *omelette soufflée* without any outbreaking on the part of my mercurial companion; the coffee-room began to thin, and I began to be more at my ease than before, when Daly proceeded to recount

some of his adventures, which proved to me that, however deeply the scene of the preceding day at Twickenham might have impressed itself on *me*, it was to *him* a “trifle light as air.”

“But how,” said I, “shall I ever reconcile the Dods? I am destined to meet those people; you are not.”

“I was destined to meet them this morning,” replied Daly, “and if it had not been for this ‘bleeding piece of earth,’ laying hold of his nose, “I could not well have escaped; but for you, rely upon it, it will all turn out right —in a week they will have utterly forgotten you.”

“What,” said I, “will Fanny so soon lose all recollection of me?”

“To be sure she will,” said Daly. “As somebody says,

‘Fancy’s visions, like the sand,
Every idle mark receive;
Lines are traced by every hand,
Which no lasting impress leave.’”

“ But *her* hand,” said I.

“ You took and shook,” replied he, “ and very wisely too; but recollect it was nearly dark when we made our exit.”

“ And you insulted the father —.”

“ — who first affronted *me*,” said Daly; “ and even if the girls *did* know me this morning, and recognise me as assistant clerk to the deputy assistant surveyor of the Paddington Canal Company, the deuce is in it if the whole family must not respect me as a high-minded, honourable, and conscientious assistant clerk.”

“ Yes, but it was quite light enough when we arrived,” said I, “ to see them and their beauties; why not light enough for them to see our deformities?”

“ Deformities!” said Daly; “ speak for yourself, Mr. Gurney; women don’t care so much for men’s beauty as you may suppose. Here am I—plain, but genteel, like a Wedgwood teapot—I make my way, and whatever you may think of yourself and Miss Fanny, I flatter

myself Gussy, as her ma' called her, was equally well pleased with your humble servant."

"And yet we may never see either of them again," said I.

"I am not so sure of that," said Daly, "I have done worse to a father than I did to Dod in the course of my life, and yet have come to be domesticated in the family afterwards."

"As how?" said I.

"Some three years since," said Daly, "I was down at my friend's Sir Marmaduke Wrigglesworth's, in Surrey—charming place—nice wife—excellent shooting—capital cook—and inexhaustable cellars. 'Marmaduke,' said I, 'I hate battues; here you have a party staying for the wholesale slaughter of pheasants—eleven double barrels all of a row—more chance of homicide than sport; do me the kindness to let me off, and permit me to 'range the fields' by myself, and I will consent to be laughed at for my small gains when the card comes in before dinner. 'Do as you like,' said Wrigglesworth: 'this is Liberty Hall—shoot alone or in company—with

dogs or without—have the keeper or not—*comme il vous plaira.*’ Accordingly away I went, more eager for the sport as having to render an account of my single exploits, young enough to do my day’s work well, and strong enough to bring my day’s work home. I admit I was not quite so well pleased with what I saw, or rather what I did not see, as I went on—birds were scarce, wild, and shy, and I did not get a shot for the first hour, except at a venerable rabbit, who had retired from public life, but who had somewhat incautiously left his tail out of the burrow which he had selected for his final retreat—at him I went, and he died—first tenant of my bag.”

“A tenant in tail,” said I punning professionally.

“Well, Sir,” continued Daly, who never stopped for any body, “on I went until at last, after three hours’ ploughing and plodding, I fell in with one of the nicest little snug copses you ever set your eyes on. In I went—whurr went the pheasants—bang went the barrels—down

came the birds—and by the time I had crossed the copse, three cocks and—*heu mihi!*—two hens graced my store.”

“ Pretty sport for the time,” said I.

“ No sooner, however,” said Daly, “ had I emerged from the thicket, than I found myself upon a sort of parkish-looking lawn, on the rise of which stood a very respectable house, at the door of which I could distinguish a group of persons standing, and from the court-yard of which I saw some sort of servant leading forth a stout short-legged pony, with a thick neck and a stumpy tail—evidently master’s favourite—equal to fourteen stone, warranted never to shy, trip, or stumble. Upon its back did I see a portly gentleman bestride himself, and forthwith begin to canter towards me, followed at a somewhat splitting pace by two keepers on foot, each armed either with guns or sticks, which, I could not easily distinguish.”

“ I foresee,” said I.

“ So did I,” said Daly, “ the moment I saw the governor coming full tilt, I knew I had been

trespassing, and the moment I stepped upon his infernal lawn, felt that I had put my foot into it."

"Well," said I, "what happened?"

"Why," continued Daly, "I standing still, and he moving somewhat rapidly, the elder of the two had the best of it, and I was very soon within six inches of his cob's nose, and within about half a yard of his own. 'You are a pretty fellow, Sir,' said the irate gentleman, 'to come poaching and killing the birds in my preserves, close to my house—why what the devil are you thinking of, you rascal? Here, Stephens—Thomson—'

"'Sir,' said I, 'I am extremely sorry—'

"'Sorry,' interrupted Mr. Bagswash—(for such was the gentleman's name)—'sorry, yes, and well you may be sorry; Botany Bay is too good for a fellow like you, Sir. Lay hands on him.'

"'One moment Sir,' said I; 'I am a gentleman.' Whereupon Squire Bagswash and his keepers burst into an unseemly fit of laughing.

"'A pretty gentleman too,' said Bagswash.

“ ‘ I thank you, Sir,’ said I, ‘ I don’t want compliments, I only want a hearing. I am staying on a visit at Sir Marmaduke Wrigglesworth’s, and here is my card.’ Saying which I produced —from what I happened by the merest but luckiest accident in the world to have about me, my card-case—my visiting ticket.

“ ‘ Young man,’ said my opponent, having read it, ‘ is this genuine?—My name, Sir, is Bagswash; I am personally known to Sir Marmaduke.—Is what you are saying true?’

“ ‘ Sir,’ said I, ‘ I am not accustomed to have my word doubted. I admit, that not being perfectly acquainted with the boundaries of the Wrigglesworth property, I have transgressed and trespassed. I am sorry for it; and sorry that you should have so far forgotten yourself as to use language which, I am quite sure in a more temperate mood you would regret.’

“ ‘ Sir,’ said Bagswash, half doubting, and certainly more than half fearing me, ‘ I don’t know that I have used any strong expressions, I——’

“ ‘ Rascal, I think,’ said I, bowing profoundly.

“ ‘ If I did, I—really,’ said Bagswash, ‘ I—might—but I was irritated—Sir, this is my manor.’

“ ‘ Why, Sir,’ said I, ‘ as to your manner, I do think it might have been a little more courteous—I—’

“ ‘ Yes, Sir,’ said my antagonist, who evidently was anxious to justify his coarseness and vulgarity, ‘ but—the manor, I mean—for I can’t pun, Sir, and I hate puns, Sir; the manor I mean, costs me a very large sum annually—a very large sum, indeed, Sir, to preserve; and therefore when I see what I conceive to be a poacher immediately under my nose, actually in my homestead—upon my lawn, I may say—shooting right and left; it does put me in a passion, and I own I was warm, and perhaps hasty; but it *is* a provocation, and I should like to know, under all the circumstances, what *you* yourself would say if you were *me* at this moment?’

“ ‘ Say, Sir ! ’ said I, ‘ I haven’t the smallest hesitation about that, Sir. If I were *you* at this moment, I should say,—‘ Mr. Daly, I beg your pardon for the hasty way in which I spoke when I thought you a poacher ; and in order to show that although passionate I am not vindictive, I hope as it is just luncheon-time, and you must have walked a long way and havn’t had very good sport, that you will do me and Mrs. Bagswash the favour to come in and take a cutlet, or a little cold meat, as the case may be, and make up our differences with a glass or two of wine.’

“ ‘ By Jove,’ cried Bagswash, ‘ you are a queer fellow—the very spit of your father, whom I knew before I retired to these parts.’

“ ‘ Oh,’ whispered one of the keepers to the other. ‘ Master does know him—he *had* a father.’

“ ‘ Oh,’ said the other; and they both immediately lowered their sticks to the ground.

“ ‘ And,’ continued the squire, ‘ you have only just anticipated me in an invitation, except that

I apprehended some more serious requisition on *your* part.'

" 'Not a bit, Sir,' said I; 'there are a vast many gentlemen in the world who don't look like gentlemen, and the shooting jacket and gaiters equalize appearances so much, that Nature must have done a vast deal to give a man an aristocratic appearance under so rough a husk—but as to any meeting, except at your hospitable table, I have not the slightest wish for it. In my opinion, Sir, one luncheon is preferable to two balls.'

" 'Ah!' said Bagswash, 'I am glad o' that, in spite of your pun. Run up, Stephens, and tell them to get luncheon as soon as possible. Mr. Daly, a friend of Sir Marmaduke Wrigglesworth, is coming to join our family party.' "

" Well, Daly," said I, "there your presence of mind served you well."

" Hear the sequel," said Daly. " Encouraged by the acquiescence of Bagswash, as I was yesterday by the invitation of Dod, I proceeded towards the house, placing, ever and anon, my

hand on the neck of his cob, or the pummel of the saddle, in order to mark to the distant group the familiar nature of our acquaintance ; and in this fashion we reached the mansion, upon the steps of which a bevy of graces, in number more like the Muses, welcomed us. I *had* a reputation even then, and the moment the girls had heard who was coming, they made up their minds to mirth—even the big Mrs. Bagswash rolled herself into the hall, like a fillet of veal upon castors, to do me honour.

“ Bating the parents,” continued Daly, “ I never saw a more prepossessing family. I forgot all their names, but one was slim and sylph-like, another plump and pleasant, a third a wicked-looking brunette, a fourth a demure and bashful blonde : all I felt as I entered the house was, that if I had brought eight friends with me, I might, by giving each his choice, have had some one of the ‘ tuneful nine ’ left entirely to myself.”

“ And,” said I, “ were you the only man !”

“ No,” replied Daly, “ there were two yahoos,

in white cord breeches and leather gaiters, and a boy with a frill and a frock, upon which a favourable eruption of brass sugar-loaf buttons had taken place; a Dr. somebody, who turned out to be the nearest apothecary; and a very pale, long-legged youth, the curate of the parish."

"A largish luncheon party," said I.

"Well," said Daly, "I sat down, having first very much ingratiated myself with old Bags-wash, who was as chary of his pheasants as if they had been of the golden breed, by insisting upon it that his man Stephens should disencumber my bag of the birds which I had shot on his land, retaining my solitary rabbit, in order to grace my tale when I reached Wrigglesworth; and there I found myself placed between mine hostess, and number one of the daughters—very nice, pretty thing—not what one should call well set up, but Nature, as I said about gentlemen to her papa, had done a great deal for her; poor thing, how I pitied her!—and pity is akin to love. So, after luncheon, and *some* wine, do you know,

Gurney, I almost began to subside into a tenderer feeling. But then, one of nine!"

"Well, and how did it end?" said I.

"Why," replied Daly, "it would have ended, I have no doubt, as prosperously as it begun, had not my new friend, Bagswash, committed himself by begging me to drink some London Particular Madeira—Duff, Murphy, Gordon, or something of that sort. The moment I tasted it I knew what it was, and rather elated by circumstances, and my other previous libations, I had the temerity to address the dear, interesting, white-necked creature next me, and in a tone of confidential condolence, begged her not to be deceived, for that although her amiable papa might be a judge of other things, he evidently knew nothing of wine, and that the stuff he called 'London Particular' was neither more nor less than infernally bad Teneriffe.

"The male Bagswash was unconscious of the imputation, but the queen B. overheard me, and looking towards what might literally be called her open countenance, I saw symptoms of fire

breaking out, and in less than a minute afterwards the domestic Proserpine exclaimed, ‘Come, girls, let us go—too much of your *pa’s* Tenreefe will do you a mischief.’ Up she got, and out she wheeled herself, and the moment she set the example, away went the nine she Bagswashes, like so many goslings after the maternal goose.

“I,” continued Daly, “regretted the retreat, for I had had an opportunity to insinuate myself, and never saw an audience more thoroughly prepared to be gratified; indeed so convinced were they, from what they had heard of me, that I was a vastly agreeable person, and talked epigrams, that when, while they were all sitting with their ears open to catch my *facetiae*, I happened to observe (the first observation I had made, too, and that, in reply to a question of the big Bagwash) that I thought mustard went remarkably well with cold boiled beef, they all burst out into an immoderate fit of laughter; and the Doctor, who had been tutored into a belief in my superlative wit, exclaimed, ‘Oh, oh, that’s too bad!’ which every fool cries out,

either when he thinks a thing remarkably good, or does not comprehend it in the least, which last was the case—as indeed it was with all the rest of the party—with my new-found medical friend."

"Did you contrive," said I, "to affront the rest of the company before you quitted it?"

"Not all of them," said Daly; "no; I believe I got off pretty well, but evidently the worse for wear; for, Teneriffe or not Teneriffe, it is my maxim to stick to the wreck as long as she floats, and as long as I could get anybody to sit, I staid; the curate and the boy with the frill went with the ladies, but Bagswash and the parish Paracelsus remained. However, at last, seeing all the bottles empty, and no disposition on the part of Baggy to replenish, I made a move, and never did I see a man more happy at having got out of a scrape than mine host. He sent his kindest regards to the Wrigglesworths—hoped to see me soon again—did I know my road home? In short I cannot enumerate the civilities he heaped upon me, which,

considering his respect for my friend Sir Marmaduke, and the fact of his having nine unmarried daughters, I duly appreciated, and forthwith bent my way homewards."

"Glad, I should think," said I, "to be safe out."

"On the contrary," said Daly, "I should like to have remained where I was; if it had not been for the anger of the respectable cat of nine tails about the Teneriffe, it would have been a very agreeable domicile. However, once started, onwards I went, rejecting indignantly, the offer of Bagswash to send a man to show me the way—Nothing I hate so much; as if a man who had followed his nose into a place could not follow his nose out of it."

"I trust," said I, "that your intrepidity was crowned with success."

"Rather crippled," replied Daly, "as you shall hear; however, there are two ends to my story, or rather a story and a sequel."

"Pray go on," said I, knowing that so long

as his breath lasted, his tongue would wag, as a cherry clapper does, while the wind blows.

“Gad, Sir,” said he, “I walked off—I admit the Teneriffe to have been potent—and I thought of one thing, and another thing, and I believe I thought of all things in the world, except the way which I was going. They say, you know, some men have every sense but common sense;—my case to a hair. Common sense is like flour,—the other sort of sense is like sugar, and gilding, and all the rest of those things—beautiful to adorn a cake and embellish the *patisserie*, but, without the flour, mere ornaments—now, without the ornaments, the flour will make bread. I never had the flour—never shall have. So you perceive that the sugar and the flummery being my staple, on I went and went, until I began to think I had missed my way, and just then, I found myself stopped by a gate opening into—or rather shutting me out of—a remarkably well-stocked farmyard;—ricks, stacks, stables, barns—everything comfortable

and convenient ; with half a million cocks and hens, walking about like ladies and gentlemen, all as happy as happy could be. Over the gate I stepped, waded my way through the straw, and leaning over the hatch of one of his outhouses, who should I see but the farmer himself. As I advanced, he touched his hat, and civilly asked whether I had had much sport ?

“ ‘ Not much,’ said I, recollecting that the whole contents of my bag now amounted to one elderly rabbit with a Cape tail ; ‘ I am on my way to Wrigglesworth, and out of it too, as I think. How far have I to go ?’

“ ‘ Seven miles, I count,’ said the farmer. ‘ You are coming right away from it, Sir. Wrigglesworth lies over there on your left.’

“ ‘ Thank you,’ said I, ‘ thank you. If you will just give me a sort of concise direction—I am a dab at topography. Merely give me the points, and I’ll go across a country I never saw in my life before.’

“ ‘ Well, Sir,’ said the kind fellow, ‘ if so be as that is case, I’ll tell you. When you get out

of the gate down there, turn to your left, and keep on straight till you come to Pussy's Nob; then away to the right, over Sumpter's Green, and you'll soon see the Crooked Billet. Don't go near that; but turn short round by Wheatly's Copse, keep on, till you come to the stile on your left; go over that, through Timsbury's Lane, and that will bring you out by the Three Mackerel, and there they'll be sure to put you in the right road.'

" 'Thank you,' said I to the farmer, ' I will follow your instructions most implicitly; but I suppose I shall have no chance of getting a shot now in that direction—even at a pheasant roosting—eh ?'

" 'No, Sir,' said the farmer; ' can't say as how I think you will get many more shots this evening.'

" 'Well,' said I, ' now both my barrels are loaded. I've got nothing in my bag but an old buck-rabbit with a nob tail; and as I hate going home with no proofs of my sport, and the one-head—or tail—that I have bagged takes the

domestic character, what shall I give you to have a shot with both barrels at all those ducks in the pond, and the fowls on the side of it, standing here, and to carry away what I kill ?

“ ‘ You’ll kill a woundy sight on ‘em, I think, at that distance,’ said the considerate farmer.

“ ‘ Perhaps yes—perhaps no,’ said I.

“ ‘ And to have all you kill?’ said he, doubtfully.

“ ‘ Yes; all I kill fairly out-and-out,’ said I.

“ ‘ Why, you shall give me half-a-guinea,’ said the man.

“ ‘ Half-a-guinea !’ echoed I. ‘ No, no; if I kill three or four of them it will be the outside. No; I tell you what I’ll do. I’ll stand here—won’t move an inch; and you shall have a seven-shilling piece for the slaughter.’

“ ‘ Well, Sir,’ said the farmer, hitching up his lower garments, ‘ a bargain’s a bargain. Hand over the twine.’

“ ‘ Whereupon,’ said Daly, “ I tipped him that beautiful miniature portrait of a half-guinea, and told him I was ready to take my shots.

He nodded assent; and, having pocketed the money, bade me proceed. I did so. Crack went one barrel—bang ! slap went the other—bang ! —and such a fluttering, and cackling, and squashing and squabbling you never heard. I ran forward, and secured, as my spoil, four hens in high condition, a very respectable cock, fit companion for my rabbit; and from the pond fished, with the butt-end of my Manton, two extremely corpulent ducks, who had paid the debt of nature in the most decided manner: these I got out, the others I got up, and stuffed them all incontinently into my bag, delighted to think what a display I should make at Wrigglesworth, where it was quite clear I could, by no possibility, arrive in time for dinner. However, that was *my* joke, and it seemed to be the farmer's; he laughed quite as much as I did."

"Inherent good-humour, I suppose," said I.

"Why, as for that," said Daly, "you shall judge. I bagged my birds in the first instance; and then, having secured my booty, began to rally my victim; and having acknowledged his

civility in giving me my travelling directions, said to him, with a low bow, ‘Thank you for the game, Sir.’

“ ‘ Yes, Sir,’ said the farmer, ‘ you are a deuced sight better shot than I counted upon, considering what you had in your bag afore.’

“ ‘ Yes, said I, ‘ I think you are what you may call “done.” Seven shillings won’t pay for the poultry in my pouch, I guess.’

“ ‘ No,’ said the farmer, ‘ nor three times the money, I count.’

“ ‘ Well, then,’ replied I, ‘ I think I have the best of the bargain.’

“ ‘ Not much,’ said the man.

“ ‘ Not much!’ cried I; ‘ why a guinea’s worth of fouls for a seven-shilling piece——’

“ ‘ Yees, Sir, that’s true,’ said the fellow, turning slowly away from the hatch, and grinning as he turned; ‘ *but they are none on ‘em mine.*’

“ I could have killed him for his roguery; but there was so much fun in it——”

“ —— So much in your own way,” cried I.

“ Exactly so,” said Daly ;—“ that, instead of breaking his head, which he most righteously deserved, I joined in his infernal horse-laugh, and made the best of my way out of the farm-yard, lest I should be immediately apprehended by the right owner, as a robber of hen-roosts.”

“ And,” said I, “ you carried home your spoils.”

“ Not I,” exclaimed my unstoppable companion. “ Take some wine—help yourself—and listen ; for the sequel is most terrible. I had *such* a night of it !”

“ How ?” said I.

“ Why,” said Daly, “ out of the gate I went, turned to my left, and got to Pussy’s Nob ; but it began to get dusk, and very soon afterwards dark ; and when I began veering away over Sumpter’s Green, I found myself on a wide common, without path, guide, or guide post. As the darkness increased so did the declivity ; and when I had lost all power of seeing, I was gratified by feeling myself in a sort of quagmire, which for all I knew, might get softer and thicker every step I took. I looked out for the

stars, and saw a few : but they were of no kind of use to me ; for I had not the slightest idea what direction, even under their guidance, I ought to take. I resolved to avoid the bogs ; and kept edging away, until I at length reached a gap, which, as it led off the infernal common, I hoped might lead to some habitation."

" Where spring-guns and steel-traps were set every night," said I.

" Not a bit of it," said Daly. " I went on, following my nose, until I found myself at the edge of a copse, which I began to think looked extremely like Squire Bagswash's preserve. However, it was not *that* ; but I heard people talking at no great distance, and a call of ' Halloo ! ' How to act I did not exactly know, with a gun, and a bag full of cocks and hens, and a venerable rabbit to boot. What could I do ? To have answered the call would have been to be detected as a poacher in the dark. I resolved, at all events, on getting rid of my poultry in the first instance, and accordingly emptied my store, rabbit, tail and all, and

proceeded somewhat more gaily after having thrown out my ballast; yet not without some apprehension, either of being shot by the keepers for a poacher, or by the poachers for a keeper; so I got clear of the whistling firs and moaning larches as fast as I could, still utterly ignorant of my course."

" And getting late," said I.

" It must then have been past eight," said Daly. " On I trudged; scrambled over the furrows of one field, and through the turnips in another; and so on and on, until at last I was forced to sit myself down on a gate and rest; and, I give you my word, although I have known a great deal of the world, I never was so dead beat in my life as I was then. Not a house could I see. The glimmering of a rush-light in a cottage window, would, in my eyes, have been thrice more brilliant than the whole regalia of England collected. But no: there were no cottages—no rushlights; and I do believe I went the length of swearing at my own stupidity in undertaking my solitary excursion.

Only one set-off was there to the whole thing ; —I had seen the Bagswashes, male and female, and laid in materials for an *historiette* for the next evening—that is, if I really survived the present one ; but I began to feel cold, and hungry, and thirsty. However, it appeared pretty certain that out of the fields I must get, if I went straight on end, and could not well fail of fetching up in a road somewhere at last."

" Which, as you are here alive to tell the tale," said I, " of course you did."

" Why, yes," said Daly, " I did ; but it was not for a long time ; and then I had come to a full stop ; and striking the butt of my Manton on the ground, I swore, by stock and barrel, that I would not budge from under a huge tree which overshadowed me till daylight came to my aid. I was ravenous—I was chilled—I was wretched—I was tired to death ; but why tire myself more ?—and accordingly, feeling, and I dare say looking, very like the dear Don of La Mancha, I sat myself down with my back against

the trunk, and, if you'll believe me, fell fast asleep."

"Asleep!" said I.

"Fast as a church," said Daly, "and dreamt—dream't, first, that I was starving,—*that*, I think, must have been a sort of waking vision; then, that I was at a ball; and then I dreamt of being safe back at mine host's hospitable mansion; and then I had a confused, hurly-burly kind of a dream, either that I was Sir Marmaduke Wrigglesworth, or that Lady Wrigglesworth was Mrs. Daly, or something of that sort, and that I tumbled out of bed, which tumble was to me a 'dying fall;' for I rolled over on my side, and woke—in no bed—in no house, but where I had lain me down, under the tree before-mentioned."

"You must have caught your death of cold?" said I.

"No, Dalys and cats are very tenacious," said my jocular friend; "I roused myself—sat up and listened—recollected where I was, and

heard at the same moment what was really 'sweet music to mine ear,' the sound of a bell-team. Ho ! ho ! says I—you are *there* are you—where there are bells there are horses—where there's a team there's a waggon—where there's a waggon there's a road—up I jumped, and as fast as I could, just roused from my slumbers, scrambled over brambles and clambered over fences, until I caught sight of the waggoner's lantern wagglng on the side of the tilt like a bright pendulum to regulate the wheels; the moment I saw *that* I knew I was landed, and after encountering a few of those thumps and bumps which 'flesh is heir to,' found myself on a high road. Waggons, even those called 'flies,' may be overtaken, and although dead beat, and sore of foot, I soon came up with the eight plaited-tailed animals which were dragging the mountain, second only in size to the Juggernaut idol.

" My first object was to ascertain where I was, and what the direction of the vast pile before me. I found, to my particular satisfac-

tion, that I was within two miles of Ripley, and that the edifice was moving towards London—the result was, an involuntary spring upon the shafts of the vehicle, and a look at the waggoner, which, by the light of his revolver, was perfectly intelligible. The gun, the gaiters, the grace, and the gentility, spoke the gentleman, and he gave me leave to assume the post which he himself was prevented by act of Parliament from occupying. All my sorrows fled the moment I felt myself moved along without any personal exertion, and the smiles which had nearly been exhausted during my toil and trouble, returned as Moore sings to ‘gild my brow.’ ‘I have had walking enough,’ said I to myself, ‘and grieving enough—*nunc est ridendum.*’ ”

“ Excellent wag !” said I.

“ Excellent waggon rather,” said Daly, “ for so it proved; and after three-quarters of an hour’s hard tugging by the ‘*bell assemblée*’ before me, I was dropped, gun, gaiters, bag and all at the door of the Talbot—facing the green. I tipped my driver—bade adieu to the tilt—and

began knocking loudly at the door of mine ostlery."

"And a nice enough inn it is," said I.

"It turned out to be past midnight," said Daly; "and by the merest luck in the world, the exemplary widow who then occupied it had not gone to her rest, or roost. She personally answered my call, and replied to my knock. After a few preliminary 'Who's there's,' she opened the door; and the moment she recognized me—for I was well known upon the road—her delight, as you may conceive, was unspeakable.

"'Bless my heart, Mr. Daly,' said the widow, 'what a time o' night to be strolling about with your gun! Why, where do *you* come from?'

"'That' said I, 'is about the last question in the world I can answer satisfactorily. I have been wandering across a country with which I am not particularly well acquainted—have tired myself to death, and fallen asleep.'

"'Fallen indeed,' said mine hostess, 'into a ditch, Mr. Daly, I should think. Why, dear me, what a condition you are in!'

“ ‘ Exactly,’ said I; ‘ recumbent repose in October under an oak, is not particularly delicate; however, my darling, give me some supper, some hot brandy and water, and order me the most comfortable bed in the house, for I am a-tired.’

“ ‘ Why, Sir,’ asked the dear woman, ‘ where is your servant with your clothes—you cannot think of sleeping here in that condition?’

“ ‘ Not exactly,’ said I; ‘ I shall take off my clothes when I go to bed—and as for my servant, he is snug and happy at Sir Marmaduke Wrigglesworth’s, (where I ought to be too,) unless they have sent him out with a rake and a lantern to search for me and drag all the horse ponds in the neighbourhood. I tell you I am hungry—and tired—and shall be very sleepy—out with your tit-bits and delicacies—something piquant—nice—savoury, eh—and after that, a comfortable nest.’”

“ ‘ You shall have something to eat,’ said the widow, ‘ and something to drink, for those I can give you myself; but as for a bed, I haven’t

one in the house—crammed full from top to bottom.'

" 'I'm very tired,' said I; 'I can sleep compact like a dog on a hearth-rug—half a bed will do for me.'

" 'Come Mr. Daly,' said the landlady, 'none of your nonsense—I have no bed whatever to-night, and here it is almost one o'clock—you had better let me ring up the next turn-out, and get back to Wrigglesworth.'

" 'Thank you Fanny,' said I; I used to call her Fanny in her husband's time, and he was killed, switching a rasper, three years before; 'not I—I should not get there till nearly four—all the family 'in a deep sleep buried,'—no, no—none of *your* nonsense—where am I to rest?'

" 'I told you the truth,' said the widow; 'there's not a bed disengaged.'

" 'Not one?' said I—looking as I fancied most insinuatingly, and helping myself to a glass of brandy from a bottle covered with a gilt bunch of grapes, at the same time gently pressing the tip of mine hostess's little finger.

“ ‘ Not one upon my life, Mr. Daly,’ replied she; ‘ indeed we are so full, that my sister Jane, who is here, is obliged to sleep with *me*.’

“ ‘ That’s very unfortunate, indeed,’ said I; ‘ however, I rejoice that you have so much custom—all’s good for trade—at all events let me eat—let me warm myself—both in the sunshine of those bright eyes, and in the blaze of the parlour fire.’

“ Mine hostess proceeded to make me exceedingly comfortable—I ate cold fowl and ham, and drank hot brandy and water, and eventually punch. Mine hostess sipped shrub—a liquor, which if it were *liqueur*, would rank fathoms above either Curacao or Maraschino—till at last the clock striking two, reminded her it was time to go to bed.

“ ‘ Ah,’ said I, ‘ that is extremely just and proper. But alas! I am like my melancholy little friend who was ‘ very gentil, but whose hair came a leetle through the top of his hat,’ I have no bed to go to.’

“ ‘ It’s very provoking,’ said the landlady, ‘ so tired as you are too.’

“ ‘It is, indeed,’ replied I—seeing a proposition of some sort or other on tip of her tongue.

“ ‘Now,’ said she, looking remarkably serious, ‘can I trust you—will you promise me, if I give you a bed, to do as I bid you, Mr. Daly?’

“ ‘Your commands,’ said I, ‘shall be obeyed to the letter—only let me rest myself quietly and comfortably—it is all I ask—for never was poor devil so tired in his life as I.’

“ ‘Take a drop more punch, Mr. Daly,’ said my landlady, ‘it will make you sleep the sounder.’

“ ‘No fear of that,’ said I; ‘but what do you propose?’

“ ‘Why,’ said mine hostess, ‘I *have* one bed unoccupied.’

“ ‘Why didn’t you say so before?’ cried I.

“ ‘I’ll tell you why,’ said my fair friend; ‘it’s a double-bedded room, and the other bed is occupied by a——’

“ ‘——snoring farmer, from Farnham,’ said I; ‘or perhaps a tight-skinned sailor walking his way to town from Portsmouth.’

“ ‘ No,’ said she, looking very pathetic—and very pretty by the way—‘ by a lady.’

“ ‘ A lady,’ said I, ‘ oh, charming thought!—’

“ ‘ There it is,’ interrupted the lady, ‘ that’s just what I expected, you are all fire and tow—alight in a moment—now I shall not say another word, and you must sleep, if you *will* sleep here, in the arm-chair by the fire.’

“ ‘ No,’ said I, ‘ no—don’t be angry—I didn’t know—I thought ——’

“ ‘ Yes, Mr. Daly, that’s what you are always thinking, I believe,’ said mine hostess, ‘ but that won’t do—the lady who occupies the other bed in the double-bedded room is a sad invalid; she has been stopping here for some time, and the only rest she gets is by dint of laudanum, which the doctor gives her in large doses, and she sleeps soundly during the night, which makes up for the sufferings she endures by day. If you choose to behave well—and tired as you are, I don’t like to turn you out or leave you here—you shall have the other bed. You must go gently into the room, and when you are in bed

I will come and take away your candle ; and as I sleep in the next room, if you don't remain perfectly quiet I shall insist upon your getting up and coming down again here into the bar.'

" ' Agreed,' said I, ' I only ask for a bed—all I want is rest—I am scarcely able to walk or stand, therefore I agree to your condition ; let me finish my punch, and ' marshal me the way I should go.' "

" ' After looking at me suspiciously and hesitatingly for a minute or two, my dear landlady agreed to trust me ; and accordingly having seen that my bed was properly prepared she returned, and lighting a candle, preceded me up stairs, and opening the door of the room put her finger to her lips to enforce silence, whispering me, that when I was in bed I should knock against the wainscot which separated her room from that in which I was to repose, and that she would come and fetch my candle.

" I promissed to obey all her injunctions. The curtains of the other bed were closely drawn—I never felt so awkward in my life—but I had

promised ; yet one peep before the light vanished—no—perhaps the lady would wake and scream, and I should be forthwith ejected. I resolved to keep my faith, at all events till mine hostess was herself asleep, and then see—as far as utter darkness would permit—how the affair would terminate.

“ Accordingly I hurried off my clothes—washed my face, hands, and mouth as gently and quietly as possible, and having concluded my brief preparations for depositing myself in my much longed-for couch, gave the concerted signal, and scarcely was well in my place before my dear landlady entered the room on tip-toe, and coming up close to the bed-side and having whispered ‘Now remember your promise’—took the glimmering light away, and left me in the dark with my fair and slumbering companion.

“ There was something very strange in my position,” said Daly ; “ I was tired to death, but somehow I could not sleep. I lay and listened to hear whether my fair *incognita* would sneeze

—or cough—or cry ‘hem’—or play off any little coquettish trick which, under the circumstances, I thought probable enough. I durst not move for *I* knew *I* was watched; however, I sat up in the bed and began to wonder—Is it, thought *I*, an old woman or a young woman—an invalid is interesting, and bless her, she must be uncommonly genteel, for she does not snore in the least—a few minutes served to convince me that my landlady did—and *I* rather rejoiced in the sound of her slumbers, since *I* thought *I* might perhaps succeed in attracting the attention of my sleeping partner; and the fact that a gentleman of my very respectable pretensions was so whimsically associated with her—knowing mine hostess’s archness—induced *me* to attribute her readiness to quarter *me* upon the slumbering beauty, to a foreknowledge on her part that my introduction would not be considered altogether an intrusion.

“ After I had satisfied myself that my landlady was really safe, I had recourse to some slight coughs, which do occasionally infest one;

but no, my signals were not answered : the dose of laudanum had been particularly strong that night. At last I thought I heard a slight movement. I began to listen, till I heard the beating of my own heart, and felt a sort of drumming palpitation in my ears. I held my breath : psha, thought I, this woman has been cheating me, the other bed is tenantless,—a trick to try me,—and for what a stupid dolt she will set me down if I don't convince her that I had at least curiosity enough in my composition to ascertain what was in it.

“ My feelings fired at the thought. Up I got,—groped my way across the room,—the white dimity drapery being just visible amidst the ‘palpable obscure.’ I reached the bed,—I paused,—I heard nothing;—I partly opened the curtains at the side, and said in a soft, *very* soft voice, ‘ Hem ! ’ No answer. ‘ Ma’am,—Ma’am,’ still silent;—‘ are you there ! ’ said I;—and, placing my hand on the pillow, found she was. Dear, unconscious creature, there she lay, comfortably cuddled up in the clothes, and sleeping

or seeming to sleep, soundly. I was, I admit, on the point of proceeding to awaken her, in order to announce my presence, when, in stepping towards the head of the bed, my foot came in contact with a chair which stood on its right-hand side, which was overthrown with a crash that, in an instant, roused,—not my dear opium-drinker,—but my lynx-like landlady. I heard her jump out of bed. I jumped into mine, but, in less than two minutes, there she was, like Margaret's ‘grimly ghost,’ standing before me, loading me with reproaches, and ordering me, in the most peremptory terms, to take the candle, descend the stairs, and dress myself in the parlour behind the bar, and wait until she came down to eject me from the house; seeing that she could have no kind of confidence in a gentleman who had so much confidence in himself.

“ Vain were my pantomimic supplications: she would listen to nothing but immediate abdication, and I could not well be angry with her, for she had put faith in me, and perhaps run the risk of losing a valuable customer by indulging

me with the luxuries of ease and rest which, under no other circumstances, she could have afforded me. I implicitly obeyed her commands; and, as soon as she had retired to dress herself, collected my wearing apparel, and slunk down stairs to prepare for my departure, which seemed inevitable. As I passed along the passages, I heard multifarious snorings in all directions, which convinced me of the truth of my landlady's assertions as to the influx of company, and made me repent more sorely than before, that I could not for once in my life act with discretion and decorum.

“ I had scarcely finished dressing myself when my landlady made her appearance in the parlour.

“ ‘ I really am surprised, Sir,’ said she, ‘ at your conduct. I thought as a gentleman, you might have been trusted, considering the circumstances under which I ventured to put you into that room.’

“ ‘ Really,’ said I, ‘ I thought you were playing me a trick, and I could not bear your having

the laugh against me, and so I certainly *did* venture just to ascertain ——'

" 'Ascertain !' cried the landlady, ' that's just the very thing you ought, upon no consideration whatever, to have done. Did not I tell you the lady was an invalid ? Oh ! Mr. Daly, Mr. Daly ! I believe you are the d——'

" '——evil be, Ma'am,' said I, interrupting her, ' to him who evil thinks. I meant no harm, and ——'

" 'You might have ruined me, Sir,' said mine hostess.

" 'Might I ?' said I,— 'when ?'

" 'This very night, Sir,' said she ; ' this very hour. Why, what would have been thought of me and my house, if it had been known that I had allowed you to sleep in that room ? Nobody would have believed that I did it out of pure regard for your comfort, tired and knocked up as you were, and because I had not a hole or corner besides into which you could have poked yourself : however, it will be a lesson for me another time ; and now, Mr. Daly, if you will take my

advice, the lads are getting up in the yard,—you will let me order out a chaise and pair, and go on to Guildford, where, I have no doubt, they have plenty of beds, and where you may get some comfortable rest; and as the brother of the lady in No. 3 is sleeping here to-night, something unpleasant to all parties might happen in the morning, and you would do me a very great favour if you would go.'

"I felt considerably inclined, for many reasons, to accede to what appeared the very reasonable desire of mine hostess: first of all, I might do her a mischief by a staying; in the second place, the lady might complain to her brother; in the third place, the White Hart at Guildford was a remarkably good inn; and a well-made bed, and a well-warmed bed-room, would be extremely comfortable by comparison with the chilly atmosphere and the chair-slumber of the parlour behind the bar, at Ripley. To Guildford I must eventually proceed,—and why not now? So, with the best possible grace, I told mine hostess that I was at her command, and

begged of her to dispose of me as she thought fit.

“ I paid her liberally for the horses, the repast, and the portion of my night’s rest which I ought to have had; and when I stepped into the ‘ yellow and two,’ I shook hands with her, and she gave me a look as much as to say, again and again, ‘ Daly, Daly! you are not to be trusted.’

“ Well, Sir,” continued Daly, “ away I went, glasses rattling, and wind whistling: (a short stage, as you know,) and, before four we reached the White Hart. I had forestalled my Guildford sleep in the chaise; however, we soon made them hear at the inn, and in less than three-quarters of an hour I was again rolled up in the sheets, having, before I went to bed, written a note to my servant at Wrigglesworth, which I desired might be sent off early in the morning, directing him, after leaving word with Sir Marmaduke’s man that I was alive, if not merry, to come to me with my clothes and other requisites for dressing by ten o’clock, and cer-

tainly, I must say, I never did enjoy rest and quietness so entirely and completely, as upon that particular occasion. Instead of ten o'clock —having desired that I might not be disturbed —I did not wake until past noon, and then regretted that my balmy comfort had been broken in upon.

From my servant, when I saw him, I learned that my friends at Wrigglesworth had really expressed great anxiety on my account, which did not displease me;—I rather like to create an effect;—but I did not hear that dear Lady Wrigglesworth had either absented herself from dinner, or disappeared for the evening in consequence of my absence, which I confess mortified my vanity a little. I dressed, and having ensconced myself in the drawing-room of the White Hart, the walls of which apartment were most constitutionally decorated with loyal and orthodox prints, and which immediately faces the Gothic House, I delighted myself by watching the movements of two uncommonly pretty girls in the said anti-

quated edifice, who appeared to be in full possession, in the absence, as I surmised, of some greater, and probably graver, personages.

“ After breakfast I strolled out. I like Guildford; it is a nice, clean, handsome, healthy town; the hill in the street I admit to be a nuisance; the alternation between climbing up and sliding down is tiresome and even dangerous. These little objections did not affect me —nothing affects me when I am on the hunt for subjects—so away I went—smack bang into a quaker’s shop to buy myself a pair of gloves—and there—there I saw what I had never before seen—two quaker children playing about the place, thee’ing and thou’ing each other, with perfect French familiarity. Now, do *you* know,”—continued Daly,—“ it is quite worthy of remark,—that nobody—always, I presume, excepting quakers themselves—has ever seen a quaker baby in arms—a quaker lady *enceinte*, or a quaker gentleman with a *wooden* leg—eh? I like these statistical speculations.—So, having bought my gloves, I returned to ‘mine inn’

about one, intending forthwith to proceed to Wrigglesworth.

“ Just as I reached the door of the White Hart, and just as my man was bringing out my horses, my eye was attracted by a funeral procession, consisting merely of a hearse, one mourning coach, and a private carriage, which had halted before the door; two persons who had occupied the coach having entered the house while fresh horses were put to the three vehicles. A natural and not very blameable curiosity prompted me to ask a jolly, merry-looking undertaker, whose funeral it was, whither they were going, and whence they had come ?

“ ‘ Why, Sir,’ said the man, ‘ what you see here isn’t the regular job as I hopes to turn it out at Chichester next Tuesday, which is the day fixed for the interment of the corpse. Short notice, you see, Sir; could not do everything in a minute, Sir.’

“ ‘ What is the name of the — ?’ I hesitatingly asked.

“ ‘ Miss Barmingfield, Sir,’ said the man, ‘ is the name of the crophe. Poor young lady, it was as well as you and me three days ago, and was a coming down to Chichester to spend a month with its mother; when, just in a minute, it was taken ill at Ripley, and out it went for all the world like the snuff of a candle.’

“ ‘ At Ripley !’ said I: ‘ did she live at Ripley ?’

“ ‘ No, Sir, she didn’t,’ said the undertaker; ‘ you’ll excuse me—she died there.’

“ ‘ But she must have lived there first, I presume,’ said I, rather angrily; for a joker hates to be joked upon.

“ ‘ A very short time, indeed,’ said the jolly undertaker. ‘ She arrived at the Talbot the day before yesterday, about twelve o’clock, in high health, and by six at night, as I said afore, she was a crophe.’

“ ‘ At the Talbot !’ said I. ‘ And are you bringing the body from the Talbot now ?’

“ ‘ Yes, Sir,’ said the man; on our way to Chichester. We could not move her, poor dear

young lady, afore, because I couldn't get things ready till this morning.'

" ' Pray,' said I, with a degree of agitation which evidently astonished my companion in the crape, ' where—in what part of the Talbot at Ripley did the young lady die ?'

" ' In Number 3; that ere double-bedded room right over the gateway,' said the man. ' We only packed her up this morning.'

" My dear Gurney," said Daly, " you may easily imagine what my feelings were. Only conceive the idea of having been turned into a double-bedded room in the dark with a dead woman ! It was lucky that the horses were pronounced ready, and that Major Barming-field, whose residence at Ripley mine hostess so truly had announced, made his appearance just at the moment that the undertaker had enlightened me on the subject. I felt a mingled sensation of horror at the event, of joy at my escape from the place where it occurred, and of repentance for my misconduct towards my landlady, who had so good-naturedly strained a

point for my accommodation, which nearly over-set me ; and I have not a notion what I should have done, had it not been that the coldness of the weather afforded me an excuse for drinking off a glass of brandy, and the lateness of the hour forced me to mount my nag and begin my canter to Wrigglesworth forthwith.”

When Daly had finished this little episode in his eccentric and eventful life, I felt particularly sick,—I might say sympathetically sick. He perceived the effect his story had produced, and calling for Dejex himself, prescribed a glass of Garus, at that time the popular liqueur; and then whispering some directions about egged-wine, desired me to finish the claret, and commence a new course of drinking.

The subsequent events of that evening require a new chapter.

CHAPTER VI.

So much has been said and written from the days of Shakspeare to our own degenerate times about the vice of drinking, that I have no intention of dilating upon its folly and disgracefulness; but in confessing that I drank a great deal too much of every thing exciting and intoxicating upon this particular occasion, I may perhaps be permitted to say, that although, under the influence of agreeable conversation and a bad example, I might be induced now and then to exceed, I was not habitually addicted to what are called Bacchanalian pleasures; and that one bout similar to that to

which I now refer, generally produced at least a six weeks' course of repentance. So it was upon this memorable night—for memorable, indeed, it proved to me; and so rapidly did our potations affect my faculties, that in the plenitude of our mutual confidence—by which, be it understood, I mean the confidence of Daly in inquiring, and my own confidence in answering—I imparted to him the secret of my attachment to an amiable, dear, unsophisticated, creature, who was living in the romantic and beautiful sea-port of Tenby, in South Wales; whither she had been conveyed, as it had been hinted to me, to get her out of my reach, by her mother, whose designs for her were of the Corinthian order, and who had no notion of allowing her lily to waste its sweetness upon a desert “heir” to four or five hundred a-year.

I just recollect the enthusiasm with which I described my Emma's beauties as the lamps twinkled before my eyes, and the various “drinks” which Daly had ordered passed over my senseless palate; but I was diffuse in my

eulogiums, and candid in the extreme as to the certainty of my failure in obtaining the golden apple of the Cambrian Hesperides, watched as it was by the matronly dragon, who, as I firmly believed, detested me.

In those days there really existed something like sentiment and affection, devoted and unqualified by worldly grovellings. Now, these exist no longer; nobody ever hears of an unmarried woman's being seriously attached; the highly-accomplished and double-refined beauty of the period at which I write would be shocked to death if she were thought to be what in other times was called being in love. Girls like dandies, and with the dandies whom they like they flirt, and they waltz, and, if it happens to be quite convenient to all parties, eventually marry them. Wit and accomplishments have taken place of that sober serious devotion, which "looked unutterable things;" and a man, in these times, convicted of having been upon his knees, would be as much damaged in the estimation of the sporting-

world, as a horse would be for the same reason.

But when I was sitting sipping and sighing at Dejex's it was not so. I remember treasuring a fan of Emma's, as I would the relic of a saint, aye and worshipping it too. To a white kid glove ripped at the thumb, I have bowed as pilgrims would at a shrine ; and a rose which once had graced her bosom has been deposited in the leaf of some favoured book to dry, a botanical memorandum of her beauties and my own devotion.

I have a faint recollection of Daly's strong encouragement in my pursuit, and a most earnest protestation of assistance in any of the manœuvres of the post-chaise and rope-ladder school, to which, if I ever possessed my Emma, I must be indebted for that happiness. I remember, too, I loved to hear him talk of the possibility of my success, and the facility with which all our machinations were to be carried into effect, till at last I had dreamt myself into a certainty of obtaining the hand of one whose

heart I was quite sure I had already gained, and only awoke from the semi-slumberings of happiness to pay the bill, Daly having most unfortunately left his purse at home, and having no change whatever in his pocket.

I do not recollect our further proceedings with any degree of distinctness. I knew we were to walk to St. James's-street, where Daly proposed introducing me to a participation in the noble game of hazard; and I have a faint remembrance of stopping to pay an evening visit to some relations of his on our way thither; but it seemed all like a bright vision of some very lovely good-natured ladies, and vastly pleasant men, who appeared to make me entirely welcome to the party, and who drank punch with unaffected delight. All sublunary pleasures must have an end, and however agreeable this “drop in” might have been, we at length “dropped out” and pursued our journey to the gaming-house in which I was to make my sporting *début*, and which I recollect stood on the left-hand of the street, near the Thatched

House Tavern, and had a white bow window projecting over the *trottoir*, somewhat resembling a well-fed alderman's white waistcoat.

There is always something awkward and embarrassing in the *premier pas*. The first speech of the politician—the first sermon of the parson—the first cause of the lawyer, by necessarily putting the performer in a novel position, agitates, and in some degree unnerves him; and although I had somewhat recklessly presented myself to a most respectable and accomplished party of Daly's female friends, before we reached our present destination, I felt nothing very awful in my position there; one party is so very much like another, and conversation and manners, in modern times, so very much assimilate in all circles, that whether in the neighbourhood of Grosvenor-square or Leicester-fields, a man, knowing a little of the world, will, as a matter of course, find himself equally at home. But when we stepped up two or three stairs, and our progress was impeded by a stout door made of three-inch plank, and

covered with green-baize, in the middle of the upper part of which appeared a small sort of wicket or hatch, through which the Cerberus of the inner regions eyed us, in order to ascertain whether we were admissible or suspicious, I felt a sort of qualm, and a kind of wish to return; but my nervousness was entirely dissipated when I heard Daly tell the man, whose eye glanced out of the hole like that in the sign-board of the “*Observer*” newspaper, or in the puffing bill of Dr. Smellome’s nostrum, that I was a friend of *his*; upon which “Open, Sesame!” of my hopeful conductor, I found the door thrown back in order to admit us. Upstairs I went, and half-way farther up we encountered another door similarly contrived and pierced; but, at this barrier, Daly’s face was sufficient for passport without a word, and in a minute afterwards, we were ushered into the room, where the game was in full play.

I confess the smell of the lamps which overhung the round table—for in those days refined French hazard was unknown to us—and of the

company was rather oppressive ; the noise of the dice, the cry of the groom-porter, and the bawling of the betters, somewhat astounded me ; but I admit—such is the influence of sensuality—that the appetite which my copious libations at Dejex's had fictitiously produced, received an additional stimulus, not unaccompanied by the hope of gratification, when I beheld in the recess of the bow-window before mentioned, a table plentifully covered with an excellent cold supper, at which divers and sundry of the company were indulging themselves *con amore*. I began to think my simile, on first sight of the window, was now perfectly borne out, and whatever might be the sporting character of the assembly generally, the *comes-tibles* were most judiciously and naturally placed in what I had likened to an alderman's waistcoat.

I was not soon induced to join in the game, although a gentleman, whose hat was not of the newest, and who was buttoned up to the very chin in a sort of military great coat, offered me

his seat the moment I approached the table ; but I whispered to my *fidus Achates*, that whatever interest the game might have for others, the cold meat and pickles offered a more attractive subject for my present contemplation. There, however, he checked my eagerness for the attraction, by hinting, that, as the supper was furnished *gratis*, I could not, with anything like propriety or gentlemanly feeling, undertake to play with my knife and fork at a table where the keepers of the establishment must be sure to lose, unless I also performed at the other, where the chances were considerably in favour of their winning. In order to exemplify the absolute necessity of this probation, he told me that, although he was quite as hungry as myself, he should entirely abstain from eating, because (as I knew) he had no money to play with ; he therefore could not qualify for the refreshment, which, as in masonry, seemed only to be afforded after labour.

Of course I did not allow my free-hearted

friend to starve for such a paltry consideration as that, but instantly handed him out of my purse a five-pound note, with which he said he would play for both of us, so that he might at once increase the store, and give me a proper insight into what he represented to be a most pleasing and profitable pursuit.

I must confess that, after ten minutes sojourn in the midst of the motley group, all those alarms and prejudices which my grave friend, the justice, and my exemplary mother had so prudently instilled into my mind as to the horrors of gaming-houses, which, in the earnestness of their zeal for my safety, they constantly designated by a word wholly “unfit for ears polite,” had utterly and entirely subsided; I saw nothing but good humour and good fellowship. Some won their tens, and twenties, and fifties with perfect good-nature, and others lost them with equal complacency. Daly made me sit down beside him—the box came—he called a main. I did not even know the term—seven’s the main, said Daly—he threw again,

and out came eleven, upon which the gentleman in the chair with a rake in his hand, cried out “Eleven’s a nick,” and immediately I saw my five-pound note converted into a ten, by a process which appeared to me not only extremely simple, but remarkably pleasant. Daly threw again, again called seven and threw nine; a loud cry of “Five to four,” rang through the room; “Fifty to forty,” cried one, “Done,” bawled another,—“Do it in fives, Colonel,” screamed a little man very like a frog in the face, upon whose back an Irish gentleman was sitting or leaning, pushed forward by half a dozen eager spectators behind *him*. I heard nothing but “Five to four” for a minute or two, varied with a counter-cry of “Nine to seven;” then a pause, broken only by the rattling of the dice, and then a call of “Nine—the caster wins;” whereupon notes and guineas changed hands all round the outside rim of the table, and Daly swept up ten pounds as a stake, and five for his single bet.

I was then as much pleased with the practice

of the game as I had just been with the principle, and although Daly “threw out,” as they called it, next time, and lost five pounds, it was clear he had realized fifteen; so that having myself been a winner of seven before, on our partnership account, I took the box, and covered five sets of one pound each, omitting the more important ones, which I could not afford to touch. I called my main, seven—and threw it—raked up my money, and called again, seven; threw deuce-ace; upon which the monster in the chair bellowed out “Crabs,” and made no more ado but swept away all my stakes, and whisked the dice out of my reach with a kind of rat-trap which was stuck to the end of his stick.

Having, however, now done my duty by playing, although I had neither lost nor won, I nudged Daly as to the eatables; he assented to my practical proposition, and we quitted the round table for the long one, where I admit I felt myself more of an adept than at the other. During my repast, which I enjoyed, Daly was

particularly assiduous in disabusing my mind with respect to the illiberal prejudices by which sporting men were so regularly assailed. He pointed out to me many men of high distinction, fathers of families, men holding high ostensible situations, who were actively engaged in the fascinating pursuit, and dwelt particularly upon the misapplication of the gross term, universally applied to houses of that description.

“ So far,” said Daly, “ from hazard being considered a wrong or disreputable game, you know, of course, that the kings of England, till the reign of George III., used annually, on Twelfth-night, to play hazard in an open room in St. James’s Palace, which ceremony the public were admitted to witness. Hence the name given to these places of amusement.—The room in which the king publicly exhibited himself to his people, doing exactly what all our sporting friends are doing here, was called as those houses are now called on account of its darkness by day, and hence the opprobrium which has fallen upon us players in

modern times, who congregate in places which, to the delicate imaginations of little masters and misses, deserve the same horrible appellation on account of their infamy, instead of having received it from the court itself: hence, too, the title of my worthy friend in the chair with the rake—he is called groom-porter—why, nobody on earth could possibly surmise, who did not know that in the royal hazard-playing, which I have just mentioned, it was the duty of the groom-porter of the palace to call the odds.”

“ That I did *not* know,” said I, excessively pleased to find that the temple of chance did not deserve the hard name which, from mingled ignorance of its honest joys, and the derivation of the name itself, my parent and guardian had thought proper to give it. I believe I appeared sceptical as to my friend’s facts, which, however, made him more earnest in his asseverations; and when I ventured to express a doubt that any room in a palace could be called by such a name, he convinced me of his correctness by

telling me that it was the room in which the birth-day odes were always performed, which odes it was customary to rehearse previously at the concert room in the Devil Tavern, Fleet-street,—a circumstance which, I then saw, gave the only point they possess, to the well-known lines on the poet laureate of the day.

Somehow, Daly succeeded in soothing all my alarms, and quieting all my scruples, and I found myself almost insensibly swallowing large jorums of cold brandy and water, thereby merely following the example of my surrounding neighbours, who evidently were friends of the concern, if not of the house, and who appeared taking in provision enough to serve them for the next three days; and in this calm state of amusement, in the midst of the din and rattle, which at first I could scarcely endure, I went on until, tempted by the good fortune of Daly, I began to feel an unaccountable desire to resume my place at the board. In making the effort, I found myself more unsteady than I had expected; however, the distance was not great,

and aided by Daly, I seated myself again at the table. I did not like to mention to Daly the promised division of spoils, because I thought he might go on and win, as he seemed extremely lucky, and that it would be better to let him take his own way. Accordingly, I drew forth my only ten-pound note, last resident of my purse, and began my career. A most assiduous friend, whose face I had never seen before, brought me a new edition of brandy and water, which I drank, and then took the box and played with small and varying success ; but the heat and excitement very soon produced a sensible alteration in my deportment. I began to wish to find Daly and to retire, but my eyes in vain wandered over the groupe ; I inquired of a man with whom he had been conversing, and found that he had taken his departure. I was surprised that he should have left me in the hands of the Philistines, but much less alarmed or mortified than I should have been under any other circumstances. I drank more, and played on—and on

—and on. Nor did consciousness come to my aid until I was awakened by my servant coming into my room to fetch my clothes, at about nine o'clock in the morning.

His address to me was somewhat astounding —“Where shall I put all this money, Sir ?” said he. I looked up, and saw him in the act of withdrawing from my *coat* pocket a handful of bank-notes, ones, twos, fives, tens, and so on.—

“Oh,” said I, affecting a perfect composure, “leave it on the table.”

So he did ; but out of the room he had not gone one minute before I jumped out of bed to ascertain, not how the sum before my eyes came there, but to what it amounted. I concluded I had won largely—but who had brought me home—how did I get to bed—did I open the house door with my own pocket key ? I had no recollection of any incident intervening between the last jorum of St. James's Street nectar and my first start from the slumbers of Suffolk Street,—there, however, lay some clean

some dirty, some torn bank-notes, of all sorts, amounting in all to three hundred and seventy-five pounds.

How these notes had become mine I could not recollect; that they had remained mine while I was in a state of such perfect unconsciousness convinced me that the men who are unceremoniously denounced as villains universal and undeniable, were not quite so black as they are painted—else how could I have been suffered not only to win when fortune favoured me, but permitted to carry off the produce of my success? This act of highly creditable integrity, done towards me in youth, I admit has had a very powerful effect in regulating my subsequent opinions of the characters of men like those by whom I had been, on the preceding night, at once surrounded and protected¹.

¹ It was some months after this occurrence that I ascertained to whom I had been indebted for the care and trouble not only of preserving my winnings, but of conveying me to my very room.

Having cast a hurried glance over my newly-acquired treasure, I returned to bed, taking with me two letters which I found on my table —one I knew to be from my mother, the other was in a strange hand. Anxious to have the lecture of my excellent parent over, and to hear how she bore Daly's visit, upon the subject of which I was quite sure she would write, I opened her's first, and therein perused the details of the affair very much as Daly himself had described them, but with a sequel least agreeable of all, informing me of the recognition which the Miss Dods had made of the “rude and forward” deputy assistant clerk, and her extreme sorrow and vexation that it could be no longer concealed, since his acquaintance with me had been admitted, that I was the companion of his most unjustifiable frolic. As far as that went, as I had secretly resolved to marry nobody but Emma Haines, it was a matter of no great importance, to *me*, although the acquaintance with the young ladies would have very agreeably enlivened

the circle at Teddington, had I intended to make the cottage a place of frequent resort. Matters had now entirely changed as far as my means and inclinations were concerned; the previous night's conversation with Daly had quite determined me on my course. He had overcome, with arguments which I considered full of sound reason and justice, all the boyish scruples I had hitherto felt with regard to filial obedience upon points where the heart was concerned, and was completely convinced that love—love of that peculiar sort which Daly had made me sensible I felt for Miss Haines—was paramount to all other sentiments, duties, or affections.

It is extraordinary to see with what facility a shrewd and clever person can win over a less-experienced man to the principles he advocates, provided their character and tendency are in unison with the less-experienced man's feelings ! I could not understand what it was that had hitherto kept me tongue-tied with respect to Emma, a being I loved by stealth, as far as my own parent was concerned. I owed my mother

the allegiance of a son it was true, but I had a right to an opinion of my own, and Emma Haines had a fortune of five and twenty thousand pounds, and the match would be a good match, and she was fond of me and I was fond of her ; what then was the objection ?—her mother's positive refusal to hear of such a thing as a proposal from a pennyless boy ; and this refusal I knew, if I mentioned any thing on the subject to my parent, would heat up the Gataker blood to boiling, and I should be as solemnly warned by my own mother to desist from any further attempts upon the heart of Miss Haines as I had already been by hers.

However, rope-ladders, post-chaises, and all the rest of it, were dancing in my imagination ; and for an instant I believed that fortune had at last withdrawn the fillet from her eyes, and already displayed her favourable intentions for the future by putting in my possession, by her own means, a sum adequate to defray all the necessary expenses of my juvenile matrimonial expedition. With these bright visions in

my mind's eye, it may be supposed I did not read my poor mother's details of Daly's visit with any profound attention; but hastily scanning the letter, I threw it down in order to make myself acquainted with the contents of the other epistle. I broke open the seal and read as follows:—

“ 6 o'clock, Friday.

“ Dear Sir,—I despatch this to you the moment I reach town. I was called into your mother at a little after three, whom I found in a very afflicting state, from an attack of apoplexy. Having taken the most effective measures at the moment, I set off to town as fast as I could in order to find and carry down Dr. Baillie to her. I arrived just now, and while he is getting ready to return with me, I write this. Let me entreat of you not to lose a moment in going to her; for, although I would not excite unnecessary apprehensions, her case is a serious one, and may *prove very dangerous*. Nothing I can add will express the urgency of your visit more strongly than the simple fact

that having restored her to consciousness before I quitted her, the first words your mother uttered were your name, and an entreaty to see you."

* * * * *

When I read thus far, the letter fell from my hand—my eyes swam—my head turned round. I felt that mad impatience, that necessity for immediate action—that wildness of purpose, which are the instant results of intelligence like this—my mother dying and calling for me—dead, perhaps, without seeing me, and I revelling in heartless pleasure, in sensual dissipation, in moral turpitude, and actually planning future disobedience to her wishes, and revolts from her just and affectionate control. She who had borne me, nursed me, loved me better than herself, to be neglected and forgotten!—yet I was not so base—so vile. I could not have anticipated the awful visitation; I had seen her well the previous evening—had parted from her—had received the fond, maternal kiss—perhaps the last. There were no symptoms, no warning

of this thunder-stroke which was so soon to fall and sever, perhaps, the ties of affection and love ; yet how could I reflect that I might have been home early ; that I might have received the letter from the village apothecary, which I had just read, in time to have seen her, even to have received her last blessing, and to have closed those mild blue eyes which for years and years had beamed so tenderly on *me*.

I struck my forehead with my clenched fist—I hid my burning cheek in the pillow—tears relieved the agony of my heart. I rang the bell—my servant came. I ordered him to get the horses instantly. He evidently thought me mad—I think I *was* so. I had, never since I could remember, been so near a great calamity, such as the loss of a beloved parent—a neglected parent, now seemed to be—neglected indeed she was ; for while I knew that she was within my reach, I was careless as to visiting her ; her house was made unpleasant to me by her ungracious companion, and, as I have said before, my mother's temper itself had been unfavourably

changed by the influence and irritation of that odious person ; yet now that there was a chance that she was gone, that I should never see her smile, never hear her voice again.

In this temper of mind, I need hardly say that I flew rather than rode from London. I was insensible to every object, to every feeling —to every impression but the one—and the idea that my poor mother was, perhaps, on the verge of another world, and that an increased rate of travelling might yet bring me to her fond embrace, made me urge the willing animal upon which I was mounted to the top of his speed. In less than an hour I reached Twickenham. As I entered the road leading to Teddington, a fatal sound struck my ear. I pulled up my horse and listened—with a dread beyond imagination I heard it again. I turned sick—my heart seemed to cease its pulsation ;—it was too surely the death-bell tolling for my poor lost, lost mother !

The blow had fallen—no more was there need of hastening to the house of mourning.

Not all the prayers of all the world could give me now that which of all things most I craved—that mother's blessing. No; mute was the tongue which had taught me truths I heeded not—cold were those lips from which a parting kiss would have been some consolation in the hour of separation;—I had lost them all—all by my own heartless folly and dissipation—by my addiction to the society of those against whom her affection and experience had so often cautioned me;—while yet my sainted parent lay on the bed of death, I was revelling and gambling in the house of sin!

I dismounted, and bade the servant go on with the horses. I could scarcely stand, and I could not bear the man to see how little of a man his master was. He trotted forward, but I could not stir. I leaned against a tree by the road-side, and cried like a child.

Ought I to be ashamed of this confession?—no;—the loss of such a parent was of itself calamity sufficient to unnerve a son at my time of life, who knew the devotion of that parent

to her child ; but the aggravating circumstances, my absence from her bed-side ; the reasons for that absence ; the thousand, thousand recollections which flashed across my mind—I would gladly have died myself upon the very instant.

I walked on ; and as I approached our little church, the sound of the bell tolling louder and louder as I came nearer to it, cut to my very heart's core ; for its hollow clang had to my ear even less of sorrow in it, than of reproach ;—it seemed to upbraid me for my absence, and chide me for delay. Oh ! how true it is that when those we have adored are gone—when those lips we have loved are sealed in silence, and can no longer speak a pardon for our indiscretions or omissions—we reproach ourselves with inattentions and unkindnesses, which, at the time we then fancied them committed, would perhaps have been matters of indifference or even jest.

Overwhelmed by my feelings, I pursued my way to the well-known entrance of my poor mother's pretty—once cheerful residence.

I reached the gate—the windows of the cottage were closed—and my mother's favourite dog lay whining on the outside of the door—it ran to me, and barked its welcome as I walked across the lawn. The door was opened, as I approached it, by my mother's maid. I never shall forget the expression of mingled grief and censure which her countenance exhibited as her eye met mine; the faithful woman's look conveyed at once to me the extent of my misconduct—it told me I had been sought for—asked for—prayed for—but I was absent. My conscience added a thousand pangs to those which that absence alone could not fail to inflict.

I passed into the drawing-room, where I found Miss Crab. I threw myself into the chair in which I had last seen my poor mother sitting, and, hiding my face in my hands, gave vent to my sorrow in another flood of tears. Miss Crab came to me, and took my hand, and pressed it. I felt grateful for this show of kindness, for I was alone in the world—and I wept the more.

“I know,” said Miss Crab, “that arguments are useless—I will not attempt to check the course of natural affection. Your excellent mother, Gilbert, is gone ; but, sudden as was the summons, she died without pain, and departed repeating your name, and blessing you.”

“And I not here,” sobbed I, “to hear that blessing !”

“That was unfortunate,” said my companion; “you must have been out very late, because any time in the evening you could have come; your poor mother, when she became conscious of her danger, watched the hours, and every noise she heard fancied it announced your arrival.”

“And when—” said I, “when — ?” I could ask no more.

“Between four and five this morning,” was the answer.

The hour, then, at which I was unconsciously returning from the gaming-table, was the period at which the pure spirit of my exemplary parent was taking its flight—at that moment—

Oh mercy, mercy on me!—my mother was in the last agony of death.

Miss Crab saw the convulsive heavings of my breast; the half-choked utterance of my words alarmed her, and with a kindness foreign to her nature, she left me for a moment, and returned with a tumbler of water, of which she made me swallow a portion.

“I am not surprised,” said she, “to see you thus affected; if you had been with her at the last, it would have been a source of consolation whenever the thought of her recurred; but now you will never be able to forget that, anxious as she was, to take a last farewell of you, you were out of the way! However, what’s done cannot be undone, and I suppose at *your* time of life pleasure is paramount.”

“Pleasure!” said I; “do, for Heaven’s sake, spare me this reproachful language; years—ages of repentance—will not compensate for this one fault.”

“I always told you, Gilbert,” said the odious woman, “that you would be sorry some time or

another, but not till it was too late; I'm sure I would not say a word to aggravate the bitterness of your feelings just now, but I *do* think that if you had been more attentive to your poor mother's wishes, and been more with us, and gone on more steadily, she might have been here now——”

“Merciful Heavens, Madam,” exclaimed I, “do you wish to drive me raving mad? Is it not enough that I have lost the being who bore me, nurtured me, and loved me better than herself? am I to be reproached not only for faults I admit, but for conduct for which she herself never blamed me?”

“Not in your presence, Gilbert,” said Miss Crab, “and that was the misfortune; she was too fond of you; and when you were here, she could not endure to see you pained by her remarks; it was when we were alone that her anxiety and sorrow evinced themselves, and preyed upon her spirits and constitution.”

“Do you mean,” said I, angry in the midst

of my wretchedness, at such insinuations, “do you mean to infer that I have contributed by any conduct of mine to shorten the life of my excellent parent?”

“*I* mean no such thing,” said Miss Crab; “all I know is, that Dr. Baillie said last night that he considered the attack to be the result of mental agitation, and certainly she was very much excited yesterday by the discovery of your connexion with that surveyor’s clerk, who behaved so rudely to her great friends the Dods.”

“Surveyor’s clerk,” said I, spurning with disgust the idea of entering into any explanation of the affair with my fiend-like companion at a moment when she was pronouncing the greatest calamity of my life the result of my own indiscretions and irregularities. What a heart this woman must have had! I have often, on looking back upon these scenes, wondered how anything in female form could be so bitter and so malevolent.

“I cannot talk,” said I; “I will not listen;

all my omissions and negligences are magnified in my own eyes ten thousand fold—I see them all in the most vivid colours—I need no *friend*, however kind, to point them out—but even I cannot consent to admit the justice of the charges you so unseasonably bring against me, or acknowledge myself an accessory to my poor mother's death."

I rose from the chair and paced the room in an agony of grief. "I suppose," said my *friend*, after a pause, "you will go up and see her, Gilbert?—you will be more composed afterwards."

See! see my beloved mother—she whom I had left in health and happiness but a few hours before—see her stretched in the sleep of death? —to be sure—to be sure I would. It was all like a dream—a dream from which, when I had beheld her dead, I must awake.—I mechanically answered "Yes," and as mechanically followed my *friend* to the door of the bed-chamber—the door at which a thousand times my lost parent had parted from me with a blessing

and a kiss. We entered the apartment; every thing was as I had last seen it—the flowers which my mother had gathered the day before, were blooming in their stands—her work lay on the table—all seemed as usual.—My companion took my hand in one of hers, and led me to the bedside:—with the other she drew back the curtain, and there I saw her—my mother—cold, pale, inanimate—*dead*. The world's supplication could not have obtained me one single look from those closed eyes—there was a smile on her lips, but they were mute for ever—I had never seen death before—the thousand feelings of awe, of devotion, of sorrow, of repentance, conflicting in my heart and mind, were too much for me; and, overcome by the contest, I sank insensible on the bed.

Oh that week—that wretched, miserable week—the hateful preparations for the funeral—the absolute necessity for action—perhaps it was better that such arrangements required attention. For myself I resolved that the hour at which my mother's dear remains were removed

from the house should be the last of my residence in it ; I could never have borne to see it after she was gone. This resolution produced new occupation. Miss Crab, whose fine feelings were never likely to interfere with her worldly interests, appeared disposed to stay where she was. My mother had made a will, in which she had left everything to me, excepting the lease and furniture of the cottage, which, if Miss Crab chose to continue resident there, were bequeathed to her for her life ; this bequest, and one of a ring to Cuthbert, were the only two. In consequence of Miss Crab's announcement of her wish to remain at the cottage, and of my determination never to disturb her quiet possession by even a solitary visit to the scene of my former happiness, it became necessary that certain inventories should be made, and other forms gone through, to carry the intentions of my poor mother into effect. In those arrangements I was aided and assisted by the worthy magistrate whom I have already mentioned, and who came down to Teddington

the moment the melancholy intelligence reached him.

He too accompanied me to the funeral. That day will never be forgotten by *me* ; till the moment I saw the black coffin borne from the door, I did not feel that I really had lost my beloved parent—the link was not *quite* broken ; but then —then all my sorrow burst upon me, and I was scarcely conscious of what afterwards occurred, until the drawing up of the ropes by which the body had been lowered into the grave, awakened me again to a sense of all my miseries. Years, years have rolled on, and yet that hour is still vividly fresh in my mind—the smell of the soldered coffin is still in my nostrils—the falling earth upon its lid still rings in my ears.

CHAPTER VII.

TURN we from this melancholy passage in my life—suffice it to say, that I have never passed through Teddington since the event with which the last portion of my memoranda concluded. Perhaps I need not add, that I equally avoided Miss Crab, who, (for the reader's satisfaction I, perhaps, might mention it,) in about a year after my mother's death, married one of the neighbouring apothecaries, who, she wrote me word to say, made her a very kind and comfortable husband. He had two daughters by a former wife—a blonde and a brunette. Kitty, a tigress—Jenny, a lamb. The one a black dose, the

other a mild emulsion. How they made it out with their acidulated mother-in-law, I never troubled my head to inquire; with the death of my exemplary parent my care and consideration about the Crabs and their connexions departed.

I wrote of course to my brother Cuthbert, at Calcutta, giving him information of the event that had occurred, and I took counsel of my worthy friend, the Justice of Peace. But taking counsel and taking physic are different things—his worship prescribed what I could not swallow, and therefore, although I took the advice ear-wise, I did not act upon it. He suggested my immediate departure for India in order to avail myself of the advantages which the great success of my nearest relative would secure me, and offered to introduce me to a Captain Pillau, or some such person, whose twelve hundred ton ship was a floating London Tavern, with cows in the launch, salad in the windows, fresh rolls three times a week, and champagne on Thursdays and Sundays—but what were these to me? I was in full possession of four hundred and

eighty-seven pounds, nineteen shillings, and eleven pence per annum, besides the interest of four thousand pounds, three per cent. consols. Why should I send myself out in a huge packing-case, to look for a fortune which I should not be able to realize until my powers of enjoying it were gone? Pale nankeens, with bilious-looking silk stockings—cotton shirts, and calico waist-coats, were to *my* eyes, objects quite familiar in the north-western regions of the metropolis. Why should I waste my youth and manhood in Qui-hi-ing one half the day, and salaaming the other, with the glass at ninety-five in the shade, until I at fifty, should look as if I were on the shady side of ninety-five?—No. With *my* pretensions and accomplishments—for, like Daly, I did a little of everything—nothing so well as he—but still—I thought I *might* make my way, and even achieve the great object of my ambition, Emma Haines, whose twenty thousand pounds would come in remarkably well.

Emma was the point in which all my hopes

and wishes centered, so soon as I had recovered from the shock, which, especially under its peculiar circumstances, my mother's death had occasioned. The heart, robbed of what it has been cordially and warmly attached to, naturally yearns for some new object to claim and engross its affection. I certainly was devotedly fond of Emma;—she was so graceful—so lady-like—so gentle—so mild—there was a meekness in her eye while the mind was reposing, which lighted into brightness and brilliancy the moment her feelings were excited or her genius roused;—she played—she sang—she drew—she talked—in short, she was a most bewitching person; and there was a swan-like swimmingness about her air and gait—a sort of sylphy something that rivetted the attention and charmed the heart. I *do* believe at first she encouraged my attentions out of pure good nature. She was older than I was; or rather, perhaps, I should say, about my own age; but as a girl of seventeen is a woman, when a man of seventeen is a boy,

she saw how much I loved her, before I was myself conscious of it.

Her mother had certainly—incautious, I believe, through kindness—encouraged my acquaintance ; and I used to be constantly at their house :—*my* mother knew nothing of them ; but my young theatrical friend in Lincoln's Inn had carried me there, and so I went on, like a silly moth, buzzing about the vestal flame until at last my wings were thoroughly scorched, and then, as I told Daly on that horrible night, I avowed my feelings and was rejected—not by Emma herself—but by her mother, who, having written me a letter which would have driven a stoic mad, set off for South Wales, where, as the reader already knows, my lovely girl was immured, as I fancied against her will, at the period of my mother's decease.

I have already expressed my feelings with respect to Daly, whose acquaintance I had so strangely made ; and certainly for some time my sensitive regrets as to the employment of *that*

evening, which I have felt it my duty to record at length, operated as a prevention to our future association—however, as time wore on, I naturally, and perhaps, justly argued, that although the things we did, and the course we took that evening, were, seriously and morally speaking indefensible; still, whatever might be the blame due to my companion for introducing me to such scenes, the melancholy fact of my mother's sudden attack and death, could not be adduced in aggravation of his faults—like myself he was, of course, ignorant of the crisis of her fate; and therefore, although powerfully connected in my imagination in the outset, as those sad circumstances were, I began to dismiss from my mind the combination which had made me so incalculably miserable at first, and in proportion as this needless horror was dissipated I began to exonerate my friend, and even seek his society; for having—and I was conscious of *that*—confided to him the history of my Emma, I was most anxious, now that I felt more than ever the necessity of having something to love

and esteem, to consult him upon the plan best to be adopted to carry my wishes into execution.

I was quite delighted with his frankness, his friendship, and his zeal; he told me what I believed, because I wished it true, that it was impossible to doubt, after what I had told him, that Emma was devoted to me—that my expectations that she would write to me was extravagant, that girls were extremely averse from corresponding; first, because they properly considered such clandestine communications indecent and undutiful; and secondly, because very young men are apt to be vain of female confidence, and perhaps, might, in some unguarded moment, be induced to boast, or even show the letters of their unguarded mistresses. Daly was right. Emma was quite well enough aware of the ways of the world not to trust a giddy thoughtless fellow such as I then was; but, nevertheless, she might be prevailed upon to grant me an interview, if I went to Tenby, and by some means—not literary—solicited it.

“ Action, my dear friend,” said Daly, “action is the thing;—you may sigh and swear away four sides of foolscap—most appropriate paper—and what then?—you have done nothing but record sentiments which the circumstances of a few years may entirely alter, and pledged yourself to a constancy which events may try, and even overthrow. No;—put yourself into the mail coach—start for Tenby—hide yourself up—find out her house—walk under her window, and whistle some favourite air; if she loves, she will instantly recognize it—she will be delighted to find you so active and zealous; and, ten to one, if her respectable parent can be by any means disposed of, the very next evening will find you strolling by moonlight—if there should be a moon—or in the dark, if there should not—either along the beach or on the cliff, breathing out all those delicious protestations upon which lovers live, ‘as larks on leeks.’ ”

“ Out!” said I, indignantly—“ do you suppose that it would be possible for Emma to

‘come out,’ as you call it ‘to take a walk?’—Why she is watched and guarded as if she were ‘one chrysolite;’ her mother would as soon die as hear of her ‘taking a walk’ by moonlight.”

“Never mind,” said Daly; “faint heart you know, &c.—where there’s a will there’s a way; and if you choose to follow my advice, ‘I’ll back the caster in.’ ”

“The deuce take that phrase,” said I; “no—no; Miss Haines is not to be so proceeded with; and yet I admit, I think a visit to Tenby would be adviseable, because I might plead with her mother.”

“Plead!—no,” said Daly—“practice before preaching any day. All I can say is, if you are in need of an ally—if you want an assistant—a Leporello in short, I am your man—my whole delight is doing good. I have no object but to serve my friends; and, if you think that I can be of the least use in securing you Miss Emma Haines and her twenty thousand pounds, you have only to say, ‘Daly do’—and Daly will.”

It was impossible for me not to feel grateful for this kindly burst of feeling, and the offer which my companion made; and I confess it affected me more powerfully, because during the time at which my grief completely unmanned me, and absorbed all my faculties, he was, whenever he could obtain admittance to me, the most sympathizing of human beings.— He regretted, in such an amiable manner, the absurdity of his self-introduction to the cottage, and spoke of my mother's manners and conversation in such terms of admiration and esteem, that I felt convinced, whatever might be his eccentricities, his heart was in the right place; and having established this opinion in my mind, I resolved to trust him with the management of my Tenby scheme, for the success of which he himself appeared most unaffectedly anxious.

The conversations of my enthusiastic friend had very considerably elevated my hopes. He extracted from me every particular of Emma's person and character; the one, after my report,

he pronounced angelic, and the other perfect; but I must say, in the midst of his warmth and energy, and in the full flow of exalted sentiment, he *did* come out, as the people say, with something that astonished me.

“Are you sure now, Gurney,” said he “that she *has* this money?—because we hear of fortunes, and of hundreds of thousands of pounds, and so much a year, and such and such estates, and West Indian property, and Irish property, and all the rest of it, which at last turn out to be nothing—sometimes worse than nothing.—”

“I declare, Daly,” replied I, “that I know nothing more of her fortune than common report affords; and moreover, that I consider it quite unimportant, whether it amount to the specified sum or not.”

“Have you never ascertained?” asked he.

“No,” I replied; “how should I?—could I ask Emma such a question, or her mother?—”

“No, my dear friend, certainly not,” said Daly; “but if you will take the trouble to walk with me, to-morrow morning, to St. Paul’s

Churchyard—turn to your right, through the court, across Carter Lane, thence through Court number two, into Knight Rider Street—you will see opposite to you, the Prerogative Office ; there, my dear friend, for the trifling and inconsiderable charge of one shilling we will read the last will and testament of the late respectable father of your amiable Emma, and discover whether ‘all is gold that glitters.’ ”

“ Is that to be done ? ” said I.

“ To be sure,” said Daly ; “ it is the just prerogative of an Englishman to know what his neighbour does with his property if he have any ; and as I have already told you, that in love, where there’s a will there’s a way, so you will see that in law, where there’s a will there’s a way, to find it out—therefore, to-morrow we start—*le premier pas*—to the Prerogative Office, and although it may cost us something, it is but a shilling, and anything like confirmation about other people’s affairs is ‘dirt cheap at the money.’ ”

I really was not sufficiently well-informed as

to the privileges of the people, at that moment, to know that Daly was right in his statement; and even when he told me the simplicity of the process by which all his doubts as to Emma's fortune could be set at rest, I felt a disinclination to adopt it; for really and truly, I had often before wished that she had had nothing, inasmuch as I fancied that if it were not for the difference in our circumstances, I might not be personally objectionable to her mother.

When the morning came, and I called upon Daly, according to appointment, to proceed to the Prerogative Office, of which he had talked, I felt as if I was about to do something underhanded and ungentlemanlike. Why should I pry into the private affairs of a family? Why gratify my curiosity at the expense of the independence of feeling in which I used to glory? For all these questions Daly found ready answers; and, as usual, the ice of my prudery was thawed by the warmth of his manner, and the energy of his protestations; and accordingly off we went—searched the office—paid our shilling—got our little slip of paper

—shewed it—had down the volume which contained the desired document—spread him upon a desk, and began to read the contents.

I admit myself to have been nearly as ignorant of the purport of the last will and testament of Joseph William Haines, Esq., after I had perused it, as I was before I had seen it. Not so, Daly. He was a bit of a lawyer, and he explained and expounded the whole mystery of the affair, and informed me that the “upshot” of the matter was most satisfactory—inasmuch as it appeared that twenty thousand pounds were irrevocably and unconditionally Emma’s—but if her mother married again, that sum was to be doubled; and the mother’s jointure, which was two thousand five hundred pounds a-year, was to be reduced one half, and, in addition to the rest, revert to her daughter at her death. The estates themselves, upon which the jointure was a charge, were also to become Emma’s after the decease of her parent, if she married with her consent, during her life time; but if not, they were to be otherwise disposed

of, with a variety of contingencies and consequences Hebraically obscure to my comprehension."

"I see the thing in a moment," said Daly.
"Come along—the affair is settled—we shall make ourselves extremely comfortable—"

"We!" said I. "How do you mean?"

"Thus," said Daly;—"the mother has two thousand five hundred a year, untouchable by fate, so long as she lives a widow—the daughter's twenty thousand is equally secure. But you perceive, that if the mother marries, the daughter's fortune is to be doubled, and the widow's jointure to be diminished by half. Mark me—I have a strong disposition for settling—twelve hundred and fifty pounds a year will do for *me*. I'll marry the mother, which will produce a splendid increase of fortune to the daughter, with whom you shall afterwards have the felicity of eloping if you think proper—or if not, receive her hand with the full and entire sanction of her respectable father-in-law, your most obedient humble servant, to command."

“Visions! visions!” said I. “Mrs. Haines will never marry again.”

“Is *that* the doubt?” said Daly; “if that be all, let not that embarrass you.”

“But would you?” said I, staring with amazement —

“Would I!” exclaimed he; “trust me for that—a well-jointed widow against the world for settling with. It’s a fine sight, Gurney—quite refreshing, as the cocknies say, to see the comfortable ease and independence of a dowager —the lozenged pannels of the luxurious carriage —the fat black nags with their long tails and kicking-straps, the curly-wigged coachman with his three-cornered hat on his head, and a bouncing bouquet stuck in his button-hole.”

“But,” said I, “Mrs. Haines is not likely to —”

“Leave me alone for that,” interrupted my voluble friend. “If you think the scheme a good one, I am your man.”

“And would you,” said I,—“as I was just

going to ask—would you marry a woman so much older than yourself?"

" Age is now like air, my dear fellow," said Daly; " felt by all, but seen by none. I'll marry her—take her down to Dullmusty Hall, or whatever the name of her place may be—twaddle about with her for a month, in a broad-brimmed straw hat, with a spud in my hand—do the domestic for the first four weeks—then put dowwy out to grass at one of her own farms—allow her three hundred a year out of her own jointure, and expend the *residuum* in the purchase of cross-bows, pop-guns, magic-lanterns, fire-balloons and sky-rockets."

" A profitable outlay for yourself," said I, " and a pleasing prospect for Mrs. Haines."

" Rely upon it, the scheme is practicable," said Daly; " however we may confer upon it and consider;—this evening you are engaged at Lady Wolverhampton's, where, I flatter myself, you will be pleased. She gives a *féte* after a new fashion—live fish in the drawing-room,

and a cow on the staircase—fact—fact, my dear Gurney; and if I don't contrive to make some fun, my name is not Daly."

"Remember the Dods," said I, "recollect—I will not consent to be made a party to any more practical jokes."

"But," said Daly, "Lady Wolverhampton's parties are nothing but practical jokes themselves. Her *fête* of to-night is a masquerade—at least to as many people as like to assume characters—so that a vast many respectable persons who don't choose to go to her house without concealment, will be there *incog.*, much to their hearts' delight. I mean to make my appearance, in the early part of the evening, as a Jew boy, selling macaroon cakes—come in with my basket full of tempting delicacies, which the eager company will snatch away in order to devour, like so many dragons—mum!—there's fun in *that* depend on't."

"The fun of paying for the cakes, and seeing other people eat them," said I.

"True—" replied Daly; "but the results—

the afterwards, as I say—macaroon cakes, ordinarily manufactured, would afford no sport. My man, under proper medical superintendence, sprinkles in with his sugar, certain powders of a peculiar quality, which, however salutary, taken now and then, are not usually administered in a ball-room. You'll see a scattering!—poor devils!—the gormandizers will be nicely served—the endemic of a Margate-hoy will be but a trifle to the indisposition of her Ladyship's visitors—first one ill, then another, eh—‘*si sick omnes.*’ ”

“ My dear Daly,” said I, in a dissuasive tone —

“ *Soyez tranquille, mon cher Gilbert,*” interrupted Daly; “ there's nothing like fun—what else made the effect in Berner's Street? I am the man—I did it; sent a Lord Mayor in state, to release impressed seamen—philosophers and sages to look at children with two heads a-piece—piano-fortes by dozens, and coal waggons by scores—two thousand five hundred raspberry tarts from half-a-hundred pastry-cooks—a squad

of surgeons—a battalion of physicians, and a legion of apothecaries—lovers to see sweethearts; ladies to find lovers—upholsterers to furnish houses, and architects to build them—gigs, dog-carts, and glass-coaches, enough to convey half the freeholders of Middlesex to Brentford. Nay, I despatched even Royalty itself on an errand to a respectable widow lady, whose concourse of visitors, by my special invitation, choked up the great avenues of London, and found employment for half the police of the metropolis."

"Is it possible that you ——"

"I," said Daly, triumphantly;—"copy the joke, and it ceases to *be* one;—any fool can imitate an example once set—but for originality of thought and design, I *do* think that was perfect. However, to-night shall transcend even that effort, and to-morrow we start for Tenby."

"Let me ask you," said I, "now—if you can be serious—have you really any intention as to Mrs. Haines? because ——"

“—— Serious, to be sure,” said Daly; “I never joke but when I am in earnest—like a Frenchman, who is never grave but when he is dancing. I think my arrangement capital, and so will you. We will go to Tenby together; or, if you prefer it, I will start alone, and appear to know no more of *you*, than one of the cads of the thimble-rig knows of the pea-holder. I will make my play, and, the moment I am in possession, make signals for you—eh?—We’ll settle all that in the course of the forenoon; but for the present, let us return to the habitable part of town, and make our masquerading preparations for the *soirée* at Wolverhampton House.”

There was something about Daly that I cannot describe: but he had only to suggest, and I implicitly obeyed. I had never ventured to inquire as to his means or fortune; and although the unbroken and unmitigated silence he had observed as to our joint winnings on the odious night at the gaming-house, raised a suspicion in my mind that he was not rolling in riches, as they say, I thought that his abstinence from any

allusion to that adventure, arose very probably from a delicate disinclination to awaken in my mind the recollections inseparable from the occurrences of that evening. As we walked along the Strand, Daly did, however, what he had never yet done—invited me to dine with him at his lodgings. “Let us,” said he, “dine late, and we can go together to the Wolverhampton affair—you must put up with what you can get—I live small, according to my means; but after I have married my duck in weeds, the amiable mother of your angelic Emma, I will give you—emblematic of our affection and constancy—turtle, whenever you dutifully come and see us.”

I, of course, could not object to dine with my friend; and accordingly settled the engagement for seven, and we parted after a somewhat protracted walk “to meet again.”

I confess, the readiness with which he fell into my views, and the quickness with which he seized the abstruse points of the testamentary document of the late respected head of the

Haines's, mixed with the sudden resolution which he appeared to have formed of marrying the dowager, gave me an idea that, although there was something like method in it, madness was the particular reigning malady under which poor Daly laboured? yet there was so much plausibility in his manner, and so much real friendship in his professions, that I could not doubt his earnestness and good will towards me.

At or about seven, therefore, I proceeded to his lodgings, where I found covers for three laid in his sole sitting-room, into which his bedroom opened; in which latter apartment he was occupied, when I reached the scene of action, dressing. Having heard my arrival, he begged pardon, from the next room, for being so late at his toilette; and told me to amuse myself with the evening newspaper until he should have completed it. I implicitly obeyed the injunctions of my yet invisible friend who shortly after joined me, finished for the evening, with the exception of his neckcloth, the tying

on of which he reserved for the last moment, lest the indulgence of home feelings might in any way disturb the symmetrical arrangement of his favourite folds. Well do I remember the nervous anxiety with which men, in those days studied the art of tying the cravat; and I recollect a friend of mine who had provided himself with no less than four to experimentalize upon, who spoiled them all in the putting on, and was actually obliged to wait at an inn on the Portsmouth road, in the neighbourhood of the house to which he was going, when dressed, while his servant travelled to town in a post-chaise and four, and returned with a fresh supply.

“I expect a man to meet you,” said Daly, “who will go with us to Lady Wolverhampton’s —where you know I have the *entrée*. I am her pet-plaything—a sort of Jonkanoo general for her dignity balls—and you will see me in my element there.—As Dr. Cauliflower the putty-headed physician says, I ought always to have my jacket ready to tumble in—thank my stars, Gurney, I can tumble without one—I admit I

lead my Dow Wolf a deuce of a life, but she loves me. I catch lions for her—which is a prodigious merit in her eyes.”

“ Catch lions !” said I—staring like a fool.

“ Exactly,” replied Daly. “ One of them feeds her to day—a Count Stickinmeyer, a very distinguished person in his way.”

“ And what way is that ?” said I.

“ Why, faith, I hardly know,” said Daly ; “ he has had one empress and two queens desperately in love with him—has killed divers and sundry of his friends in duels, and by these traits—endearing to the female heart—has worked his name into a glorious notoriety. In these warlike times, a foreigner, not an *émigré*, is a great catch, and he is here on some diplomatic business ; *ergo*, the Dow Wolf would have him. I have seen a good deal of him during his stay here ; and so I am to be the leader of the bear. He has one peculiarity—he cannot speak six words of English—but he talks it as fluently as either of us ; you’ll see how, in a moment after he arrives ;—upon the principle

of living from hand to mouth, he makes his words as he wants them ; the consequence is, a jargon of the most extraordinary character, which he firmly believes to be English ; and which, more extraordinary still, answers every purpose of the most refined study of our embarrassing language."

Scarcely had Daly finished his description of his friend, when he arrived ; and having introduced him to me, Daly proceeded to order dinner forthwith.

" Well, my dear Count," said Daly, " what news ?—any more conquests ?"

The moment I had time to contemplate the Count's features, I recognized, with no pleasureable feelings, one of the faces which, some months before, had flitted before my half-seeing, double-seeing eyes at the gaming-house. This did not prejudice me much in his favour, I admit.

" No news," said the Count ; " none—de unneusability of de week is quite observation-

able—dat is, by de stoppupishness of de communications from de controversialness of de continental postability.”

Daly looked at me after this curious specimen of our native language, aiding the expressiveness of his countenance by a wink—I acknowledged the attention by a slight nod, apprehensive lest the Count should observe his bye play, and add him to the number of victims, who, according to his account, had suffered by his sword, like so many larks on a spit—however, the Count’s vanity as a linguist of the proficiency he had made in our language, secured him, as I afterwards found, from any chance of discovery.

“ You have been some time in England?” said I, enquiringly.

“ Ah, ah,” said the Count, “ so you guess from de perfectibility of my tongs; I declare, I haf qvite lost my own tongs in de acquisitionness of Angleish, and my coutrymen to whom I give renconterance in de assemblations stare

to find what a impetuousness of perfection I have to spike a foreign tong, so as to be always miscomprehended for natifs."

"I declare," said Daly, "I should have fancied, if not an Englishman, that you had spent the greatest part of your life amongst us."

"You are too flattersome, Dally," replied the Count, "some people haf an aptiverousness to de possession of tongs—far excellecizing; others whose condensability of faculty is diversified into a ramificationness of stoddy to generalize, what you call de universality of accomplices-
ment."

"Clearly," said Daly."

"Yes," said the Count, "a sort of polly-glottability which is foreign to de desiration of dose who have some diversationizing of mind regardful to objects quite antipodistical to de oders."

I confess, I was very much relieved from the difficulty I had of preserving my gravity, by the appearance of Daly's servant with the

dinner—which, in the first instance, consisted of two dishes, one larger than the other, which were put down; Daly seating himself on one side of the table, and placing us at either end of it. The covers removed, we found before us a remarkably delicate looking roasted leg of lamb in the larger dish, and some exquisitely verdant spinach in the other.

“What no fish, Redmond?” said Daly to his servant.

“No, Sir,” said the man.”

“Well,” said Daly, “no matter—I told you Gurney, you must take what you could get—and as for Stickenmeyer, he is used to my way of living, so I make no apology.”

“Apology,” said the Count, “de simplitude of prandationess, is most favourized by me—both in pint of pallatability and of salubriment—de stomach of de beings of humanity is not conformable to de digestion of de objects, to which admissiveness is exercised at great dinings.”

The Count’s principle was quite in accordance

with my own, and we certainly made sad havoc with our “innocent lamb;” the wine circulated freely, and we were all in good spirits. The dishes were removed, and a second dish attended as before by a smaller one, made its appearance. Redmond with his usual dexterity raised the covers, when my astonished eyes beheld a boiled leg of lamb in one dish, and a fresh supply of spinach in the other.

Daly’s astonishment, however, did not seem to be excited; for he inquired if we would take some boiled lamb, with as much composure as if he had expected the dish, which it seemed quite clear to me he did not. The sight, however, reminded me of a circumstance which occurred to me once in the west of England, at a house where I paid an unexpected visit, and where—as one always is in the west of England—I was kindly and hospitably received. The family was a large one, and I the only stranger. I arrived within a few minutes of dinner, was ushered to my room, hurried my dressing, and was speedily seated at table.

The soup was served. It was a remarkably nice sort of broth, made of veal, with rice and vegetables—I applauded it much; at the bottom of the table was a roast loin of veal; at the top, half a calf's head; there were four *entrées*, yet uncovered. “What will you eat, Gurney,” said the master of the house, “some of *my* dish or Maria’s?” I doubted. “Hand round the *entrées*,” said the lady; two were forthwith put in motion—one dish contained veal patties, and the other some veal collops—I declined both, for I hated veal; next came the other two—one a calf’s brains, and the other a calf’s tongue—I declined those, and took some of the joint, determining to wait for the second course.

I saw, however, dish after dish vanish, and I yet remained unsatisfied; when my fair hostess, with one of her sweetest smiles, said, “We have no second course for you, Mr. Gurney; the fact is, we killed a calf the day before yesterday, and we are such prudent managers that we make a point of eating it up while it is good,

and nice, and fresh, before we begin upon any thing else." Having had this experience, and having heard before dinner, that Daly wished particularly to see "the butcher," I concluded that my eccentric host in London, like my more economical one in the country, had purchased a lamb "for fun," and was now employing us to eat it up, while it was "good, and nice, and fresh."

Daly seemed to enjoy the boiled leg quite as much as he had enjoyed the roast one; and when he had satisfied his appetite he desired Redmond to take it away, "and if there was any second course to bring it."—"Come," thought I, "unlike my precedent of the veal, we *are* to have a second course to-day, and all will be well."

In a few minutes, Redmond made his appearance with another couple of dishes; one as usual, large—the other small—they, like their predecessors, were put down and the covers removed, when, to my utter astonishment, I beheld a third leg of lamb and spinach, the

only variation consisting in the fact that the lamb was roasted like the first. I could not help exclaiming, on the appearance of this, because it put an end to my speculation of Daly's purchase, seeing that no lamb,—except indeed occasionally as a freak of nature,—has three legs; but Daly did not seem either surprised or discomposed at the exhibition, and the Count—which surprised me most—seemed equally at his ease with Daly.

“Perhaps you don’t like lamb,” said mine host, “shall I send you some?”

“If you please,” said I,—resolved if it were done in fun—for it is impossible to ascertain when a practical joker is serious—to keep up my good temper, and as it seemed a conceded point, on the part of both my companions, that nothing more was to be served, I washed down the third division of innocence with some remarkably good Champagne.

To this third edition of lamb, succeeded, three gooseberry tarts—all nearly of equal size—the dishes alone differing in shape and fashion

and when these were discussed, three detachments of cheese, and three plates of radishes—there was something quaint and odd in the evident affection for the triune number, which Daly exhibited. However, as we were three at table, I imagined he had prepared his dinner on the principle of every man his own dish—Something like the proud Welsh boy at school, who, hearing that an English Duke employed six men cooks, during the period that he kept open house, or rather open castle in the north, sneered at the alleged magnificence. “*My* father does better than that,” said Griffith ap Jones, “at our very last party before I left Cmydrilmynynddr, we had twenty-four men cooks all employed in dressing the supper;”—and this would have gone down easily, and Griffith ap Jones would have established his paternal magnificence for ever, had not a “Daly of his day” discovered the real state of the case, and announced to his school-fellows, that although the Welshman had spoken truly, the company at the supper to which he alluded, consisted of twenty-four of his near

relations, and that *every man toasted his own cheese!*

I noticed the continued imperturbability of mine host's countenance, and an occasional look passing between him and the Count, convinced me that the circumstance was not accidental; but while Redmond, the servant, was still in the room, I did not like to make any enquiry into the particulars.

“Dis Claret,” said the Count, “is butiful—dere is a refreshiness in de coolth of him, which is gracious to the mouse—Lafitte, I considere.”

“The wine,” said Daly, “is good enough in its way—but, Gurney, what did you think of the dinner?—did it puzzle you?”

“Why,” said I—“it *did* puzzle me a little—I suppose you like lamb?”

“Not I,” said Daly—“but the Count knows the truth—so shall you—I have lost a good deal of money lately with very little to lose from, and although my large creditors are full of faith—the lesser ones are suspicious of my resources—I therefore deal with many folks, each

in a small way, and the tavern-keeper from whom I always get my little dinners at home, suggested that, as I was a good deal in arrear, he should be obliged to confine his confidence in me to the extent of one dish per diem, when I wanted it. Now one dish not being sufficient for three persons, I immediately entered into a similar treaty with two other tavern-keepers in the neighbourhood, who are equally willing to trust me to a similar amount—they were all three put in requisition to day; and as legs of lamb, roast or boiled, are just now in season, each of the fellows sent me the popular dish; thinking, I suppose, that as I was to have but one, I ought to have as well as a fashionable, a somewhat substantial one."

A new light burst in upon me; and although it was impossible not to join in the laugh in which mine host and his friend were indulging, the fact which had been elicited, accounted to me for the readiness with which Daly had enlisted in my service in the Tenby expedition, and his willingness to undertake the widow, at half price,

whose reduced jointure would afford him a very snug retirement. During the time we remained drinking our wine, several circumstances occurred to induce me to believe that the Count's diplomatic character at our court was, at best, but an equivocal one ; and others in connection with this, led me, in some degree, to regret that I had permitted Daly's agreeable manners to give him the ascendancy over me which I felt conscious he possessed, and to extract from me the secret of my attachment to Emma. I anticipated the mischief which his introduction into her family might eventually produce, when it should be known that it was at my suggestion he presented himself there ; and moreover, I felt that it would be extremely unfair in me to aid and abet an alliance between him and the widow, for entering into which, he could have none but interested views, the realization of which would probably entail upon the elder lady a *roué* husband, and upon the younger one, a giddy father-in-law—but what was to be done, the plan had been mentioned, we had discussed it during the early

part of the day, the horses, I knew, were ordered, or at least, a place in the coach was taken; and if I hesitated or interposed at this period, so shortly before the opening of the campaign, and so soon after the disclosure of the real state of mine host's finances, I should in all probability have been handed over to the tender mercies of the noble Count, who before noon the next day would have exhibited, at my personal expence, "the perfectability of his completiveness in the art of pistolization."

It was, I admit, with no little uneasiness that I heard Daly give directions to Redmond to have all his luggage ready for an early start in the morning; yet how could I check the impulse of a genuine and generous friendship—his want of wealth arose from no fault of his, or even if it did, it might result from the faults of liberality, and a carelessness of worldly affairs, I therefore said nothing, although I would have given the world to delay his departure for a day or two.

It was growing late, when Daly suggested the necessity of preparing for action—the Count

was to appear in a splendid military uniform, upon which glittered several decorations, and in which he was to attire himself after Daly had finished his neckcloth, which, in the later part of the evening was to adorn his proper person. I was accommodated with a fancy domino, and thus we were to proceed to Wolverhampton House, where, as I understood, Daly had been before dinner, aiding and assisting the Countess in various proceedings for the evening's display.

I concluded, after I received this intelligence, that he had abandoned his design of physicking her Ladyship's friends with his macaroon cakes, and when he sallied forth from the adjoining apartment, in a sort of foreign dress, extremely well disguised, I imagined him prepared to enchant the misses as a minstrel, and win their willing ears with melodies such as he was fully capable of warbling—an idea which was strengthened, when Redmond gave him, carefully enveloped in green baize, what I fondly imagined to be a guitar.

The Count, who looked very magnificently,

wore no mask, but trusted to his natural personal appearance to make his way, and, although somewhat upon too large a scale for a lady-killer, I fancied him a likely enough man to delight the dowagers. It was considerably past twelve before we were fairly under way—we were each armed with a ticket of admission, which Daly informed me her Ladyship very much preferred to any other mode of invitation, upon such an occasion as that of to-night—the great merit of a masquerade being the mystery, which would of course be utterly destroyed, if the guests were compelled to show themselves, in order to obtain the *entrée*—Redmond, I observed put into the coach two or three bundles, which I presumed contained changes of dress for his volatile versatile master, and thus buttoned up, away we drove to the temple of gaiety, of beauty, and fashion.

When we approached the mansion, a string of carriages checked our advance,—noise and confusion were heard on every side—the lashing of coachmen's whips—the loud bawling of consta-

bles and Bow Street officers—the laughs of the congregated groups, as some grotesque character stepped across the *trottoir* into the house, the distant clang of cymbals, and the beat of drums, which came wafted on the air from her Ladyship's hall, all combined to whet the appetite for action, and it seemed an hour before we found our worthy No. 225 opposite the entrance to the mad scene of brilliancy and fun. Out I stepped—I created no visible sensation amongst the throng—the Baron's red morocco boots, and gold-seamed pantaloons, his much embroidered jacket, and his dangling crosses, seemed to excite a reverential awe; but when Daly stepped forth with his beard and bundle, which much to my horror developed itself, not as I expected, in the shape of a guitar, but in the more dreaded form of a basket full of “macaroon cakes,” the surrounding crowd cried out, “Moses, give us a cake”—“I say, Mosey,” and indeed diverted themselves so much at his expense, that I almost wondered he did not favour them with a taste of his stock.

If the confusion outside the house were great, inconceivably greater was that within—little did I then suspect the immediate cause of it—Daly had told me, (I thought as a joke) that our noble hostess proposed having a cow, deposited in a sort of arbour at the top of the first flight of stairs, in which one of the sweetest girls that ever lived, was to be discovered in the costume of a milk-maid, supposed to be employed in her rustic vocation, while the company were to be perpetually refreshed with syllabubs, imaginatively concocted from the produce of her toil.

When we reached the hall, we might as well have had no tickets; we found all the servants, and several of the male visitors engaged in one general action—screams above were responded to by shouts below, in the midst of which I observed two butchers, in their ordinary costume, assiduously employed in the divided task of coaxing and kicking a huge bullock down the flight of stairs, at the top of which was the dairy-maid's bower—the more they roared, the more they coaxed, and the more they kicked, the less would

the bullock stir, and it was not until the greatest skill, judgment, and magnanimity had been displayed, that the vast monster was got out of the street-door; when, as if angry at being expelled a scene where everything else was *in* character, and therefore *out of it*, he made a sudden dash amongst the horses and carriages, to the infinite peril of panes, pannels, poles, perches, and platforms.

“Isn’t that good fun,” said Daly to me:—“now come along—this is the time for the macaroons—‘the labour we delight in physics pain;’—see—watch—and mark the sequel.”—

I followed my friend up the staircase, the Count having already fallen into conversation with a very beautiful, but immense lady, to whom I was afterwards introduced, and had much occasion to admire and pity—we proceeded to the drawing-room—where a circle was formed round Lady Wolverhampton, who was expatiating in no measured terms upon the infamous conduct of the man who had promised to send her a nice elegant lady-like cow to stand

Hermione-like in the glass-case by the side of the lovely milk-maid, but who, instead, had with great labour and difficulty squeezed a huge overfed bullock into the place. The moment I heard the dear Countess telling her story, a thought flashed across me—the butcher, to see whom Daly had been so anxious before dinner, was no doubt the traitorous cause of the mishap under the malign influence of the practical joker.

The scene was beautiful and gay—the variety of masks—the diversity of costume—the boisterous mirth of the Moll Flaggons, and Irish haymakers, flirting with delicate die-away Nuns, and aristocratic flower girls—fat monks, dancing with Swiss peasants—knights in armour, lounging on sofas with Indian queens—Doctor Ollapod, in close conversation with Alexander the Great, and Caleb Quotem, seriously arguing a point of etiquette with Henry the Fourth of France. It was all exceedingly fascinating and intoxicating, and the bull having been disposed of, harmony was restored—dis-

turbed only by a shrill cry of “macaroons—cakes—cakes—macaroons—who’ll buy?—who’ll buy?” I saw the fiend of fun approach. In an instant, as he had anticipated, an attack was made upon his basket—and every body who wore a mask, in which eating was practicable, began consuming the fruits of their impetuosity. I dreaded the consequences, not only to the sufferers, but to Daly himself, who, if discovered, would of course be subject to all the serious penalties which such a trick must naturally entail upon him. Scarcely, however, had the distribution taken place, (long before the sickening effects could shew themselves,) when I felt a sudden twitch at my elbow—I looked round, and saw a Spanish Grandee close at my side. I was startled! I had never visited a masquerade before. “Who are *you*?” said I. “All the cakes are gone,” whispered the mask; “so is the basket and cloak—I’m here:”—it was of course Daly. “Come with me,” said he; “I will introduce you to Lady Wolverhampton;—it is quite prudent to do so. She will see *my* dress

and yours, and then she can't suspect either of *us* of being the macaroon cake-seller;—take care and ingratiate yourself—make yourself amiable—she's as hospitable as an Arab, and not very unlike one—hem !”—I followed him, and found myself in a moment at the side of the Countess.

“ Countess,” said he——

“ Who are you ?” said her Ladyship.

“ Mufti,” whispered Daly.

“ What, so smart, Daly !” said she: (Mufti being the mystic word by which he made himself known)—“ a Grandee ?”

“ Yes,” said Daly. “ This is my friend Gurney, of whom I have spoken—agreeable creature—sings like a syren—talks like a magpie—quite delightful.”

“ And I am delighted to make his acquaintance,” said her Ladyship——

I bowed.

“ Unmask for a moment,” said Daly; “ let the Countess see the ‘ human face divine,’ else when her Ladyship invites you to meet me at

dinner here next Tuesday week, at seven o'clock, she may perhaps be disappointed."

"Don't mind him, Mr. Gurney," said her Ladyship; "I shall be very glad to see you whenever you will do me the kindness to call. But, Daly, now tell me—had you no hand in the business of the bullock?"

"Bullock!" said Daly. "I! My dear Lady."

Hereabouts, the room began to thin—the dancers seemed particularly anxious to get fresh air—several persons were seen evidently much disordered, and the whole corps appeared in confusion.

"What's the matter now?" said Lady Wolverhampton.

"I don't know, my dear Countess," said a very respectable old body, with a turban on her head; "but Kate and Fanny are both taken unaccountably ill, and so is Lieutenant Griggs of the Life Guards, who was dancing with one of them, and as for poor Lady Elizabeth Grogan, I believe she is dying."

A new confusion here arose—the macaroons were evidently disagreeing with the company; however, only a small portion had been poisoned, and to my delight, I found that although a good many of both sexes were considerably damaged by their own anxiety to eat the things, there was still a magnificent crowd to carry on the affairs of the evening. In the midst of the *embarras*, which to the hostess was of course inexplicable, the arrival of a Prince of the blood Royal, who came unmasked, gave a new zest to the scene, and the delight which the Countess experienced at his appearance, rendered her wholly insensible to the indisposition of her numerous guests, who were labouring under the effects of her pet's performances.

Almost immediately after the Countess had entered into conversation with his Royal Highness, who had seated himself on an ottoman in a small circular room, and while he was graciously complimenting the beauty of the scene, the candles by which it was lighted, began almost simultaneously to perform of themselves an operation

called “guttering down,” and then go out, with a sort of unsatisfactory splash of wax. The result was, a nearly total eclipse, attended by an extremely unpleasant smell. Poor Lady Wolverhampton, who confided in Daly, called him to her, and mourning this new calamity, begged him to order fresh lights, which, with an air of subservient activity, he immediately did; but as he went, he whispered me to suggest to her Ladyship the expediency of burning some sort of perfume in the room. The idea was instantly adopted by her Ladyship, who, directing me to a beautiful fillagree box which lay on one of the tables, requested me to put three or four of the pastilles, which it contained, into a burner on the chimney-piece. I obeyed her Ladyship’s orders, and the instant I set light to them they exploded, and continued flashing and snapping and blazing till they were entirely burned out, being neither more nor less than four “devils” or “wild-fires,” such as we were in the habit of making at school, and which, looking precisely like pastilles, some mischievous elf had de-

posited there instead of the real article. The result was, considerable alarm—an abominable smell, and a smoke so thick that his Royal Highness was seized with a desperate fit of coughing, and all the windows were thrown open to dissipate the obscurity.

The moment the devils took fire, I was convinced that Daly was the author of this affair, as well as of all the others—that he had made the exchange, and set me upon making the proposition, in order to bring his scheme into play. However, the rooms were refreshed—new candles were brought, things resumed their wonted gaiety, and Daly made his re-appearance.

I ought, perhaps, here to observe, that along the principal drawing room, a canal, some two or three feet deep, had been constructed, with an embankment of moss, and coral, and shells, in which the much talked-of fish were destined to despote themselves, but by the time we got there, their swimming had entirely ceased—Daly had dosed them with *Coculus Indicus* just before he left the house in the afternoon, and when we

arrived at night they were all floating on their backs, dead drunk from the effects of the deleterious drug.

It was now nearly two ; and I—strange to say—felt very much disposed for supper. I asked my Mentor whether such a meal was probable.

“ Supper !” said Daly ; “ to be sure—it is the point of the epigram ; the sugar after the physic—all regular sit down ; hot soups—snug flirtations and fun ! none of your stand up absurdities,—tables against the wall, covered with cold negus, and warm ice; where men, women, and children take perpendicular refreshment, like so many horses with their noses in the manger—no !—trust to me—we shall unmask at supper. I’ll introduce you to something very charming, only do me the favour not to forget Emma, and *the* twenty thousand pounds—eh ?”

One of the bands here struck up, “ the Roast Beef of Old England,” as a signal that the much desired banquet was ready ; and accordingly every eye sparkled, every heart beat, every body rushed forward, regardless of order,

decorum, or decency, in the grand attack upon the Countess's refection. The Countess, however, having made proper arrangements, and knowing the eagerness of the best bred people upon this particular subject, had desired her house-steward to complete all the preparations for the supper destined for his Royal Highness and his select party, in the circular tent-room, immediately under the one in which he had been sitting, and where covers were laid for twenty; and as soon as all was ready, to bring her the key of the door, so that when she led the Prince to the tent, she might open the little paradise to his view, and be sure that nobody else could make an attack upon the *sanctum*. According to order, everything was arranged, the tent lighted, and the key brought, the soups alone being to be served after the *élite* had taken their places.

The rush and squeeze began—and just in the whirlpool of beauty and grace and elegance, I saw a lady, whose laughing eyes, and sweet expression of countenance delighted me, while she and another, somewhat younger than her-

self, were tossed to and fro in the eddying crowd—they had unmasked, and their dresses were exceedingly becoming to their pretty and animated countenances, and I asked Daly who the elder of the two was ?

“ Just the woman for you to know !” said he. “ She is perfectly delightful, gives the most agreeable parties in London ;—amiable, clever, agreeable, with a hundred thousand pounds of her own :—make her acquaintance by all means !” saying which, we squeezed towards them. “ Mrs. Fletcher Green,” said he ; “ permit me to present my friend Mr. Gurney, who is anxious to become your cavalier in this dreadful onset.”

“ A thousand thanks,” said Mrs. Fletcher Green.

“ I will take care of Lady John,” added he ; and in one instant a wave of humanity separated us, and I found myself obliged, in self-preservation, and for the preservation of Mrs. Fletcher Green, to take an opposite course, by which we secured our places at a table, whence we could

not even see my new friend's late companion, or Daly. It did not seem to signify much—Mrs. Fletcher Green appeared perfectly happy where she was—so was I—and we began a conversation of the most agreeable character, which grew livelier as the champagne circulated, and commenced on that night, an acquaintance, the termination of which I most assuredly did not contemplate at the time.

Another dreadful mishap had occurred since we quitted the drawing-rooms, of which intelligence was brought us by common report; by which it really seemed as if Lady Wolverhampton had been that night marked out for the sport of fortune. The Countess, as it had been arranged, conducted the Prince to the tent room—his Royal Highness giving her Ladyship his arm, and leading the noble guests who had been favored with a command to join the royal party. Arrived at the door of the pavilion, her Ladyship applied the key, the lock willingly obeyed the appeal, the *battants* flew open, and disclosed the splendid supper service of the late Earl, making the circular table groan with its

weight, and dazzling the eye with its magnificence; but what were the Countess's feelings, when she beheld nothing in the golden dishes and vases but the remnants of a devoured feast—fragments of dissected fowls—ends of well notched tongues—creams half demolished—jellies in trembling lumps—glasses scarce emptied, and bottles emptied quite—crusts of bread, with heads and tails of prawns scattered about upon the snowy cloth, and plates well used piled upon each other in the middle of the once festive board !

The confusion of the Countess was beyond description—the laughter of the Prince beyond belief—to him it was a capital joke—to her Ladyship, a serious evil: how it had occurred nobody could guess, for the door had been locked the moment everything was ready, and the key taken to her Ladyship. Consternation reigned, and his Royal Highness had to re-ascend the stairs, and wait until the whole affair was rearranged. Of course, I was as ignorant as my neighbours of the cause of this calamity, and should have remained so until now, had not

Daly told me, in our way home, that having gone out into the garden, in order to get rid of his Jew's dress and basket, where he deposited them, he found a band of Pandean Minstrels, puffing their hearts out into their pipes, to which nobody listened, and being resolved, if possible, to destroy the royal monopoly in the tent-room, to which he had not been invited, and which, although locked towards the lobby, opened on to the lawn, he directed the weary performers to go in at the window, which he set wide for the purpose, and get their supper; advising them by no means to call for anything that was not there already—to eat and drink what they could, and to make as much haste as possible, and when they had done, to lock the window on the outside, and throw the key into the four yards square pond, which in rainy weather served as a wet dock for the Countess' pet swan. All of which instructions, it appeared, the said Pandeans followed to the very letter; and thus, to his infinite delight, caused that confusion, in which his heart so wonderfully rejoiced.

It was nearly five when I handed Mrs. Fletcher Green into her dark brown chariot. I ventured to express some solicitude about her companion at the supper-room door, till she assured me that she was quite safe; "because," said she, "she has a husband here to take care of her. I am quite independent—a thousand thanks—I hope we shall be better acquainted."

Away she drove—I turned into the house to look for Daly—but I confess Mrs. Fletcher Green had made an impression upon me—there was such a charming mixture of worldliness and nature about her—I mean such a perfect knowledge of every body in society, and of every thing that was going on, mixed with a genuine kind-heartedness—a love of fun—and an artless hearty goodnature, all of which combined with talent of a high order, and accomplishments which even my short intercourse with her had convinced me were of the first class, rendered her engaging—interesting—captivating.

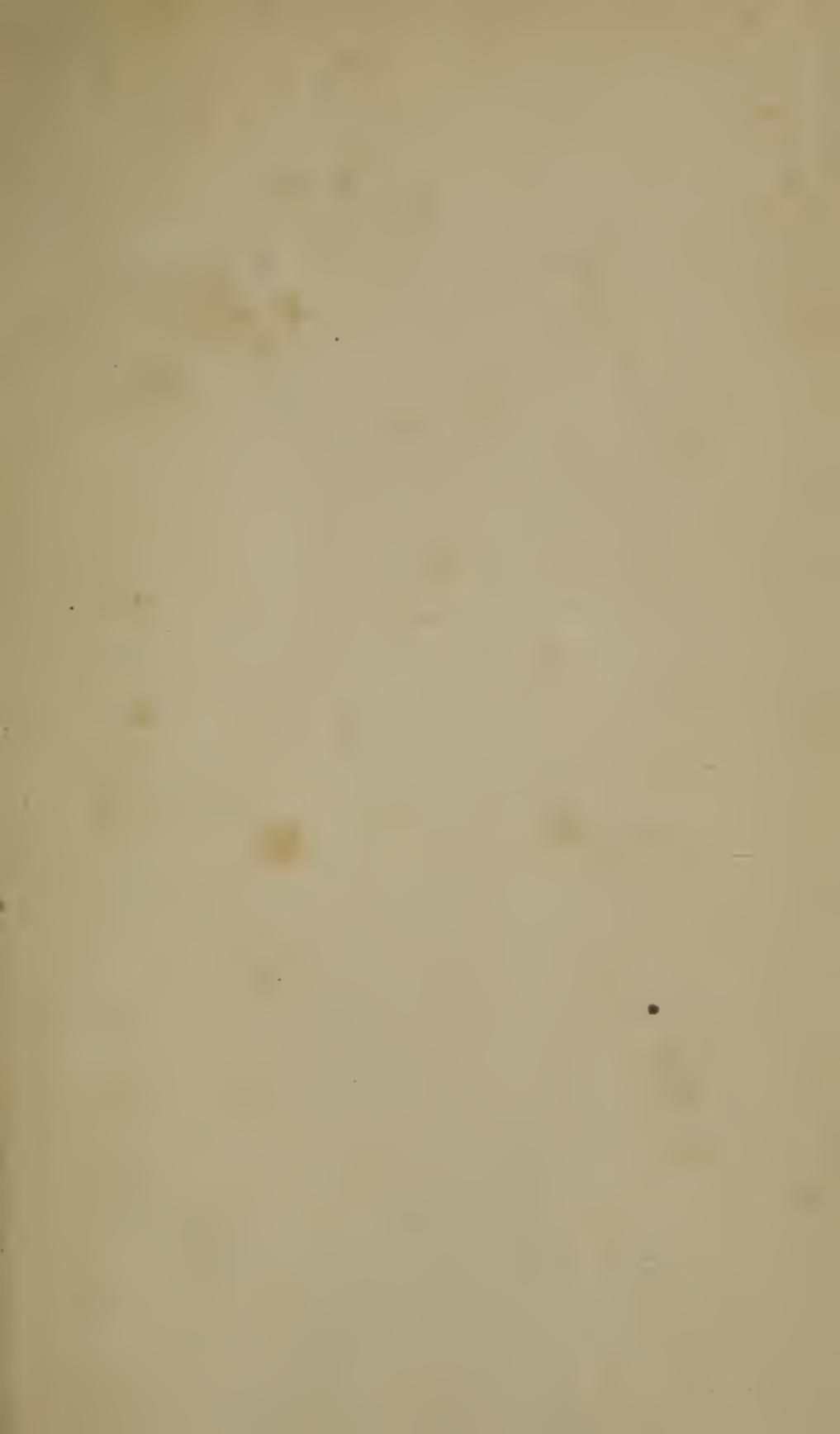
When I went up stairs to look for my friend,

the sun had superseded the lamps and candles—the decorations of the preceding night had lost their freshness; even the flowers seemed to droop—the lovely girls looked haggard, and the elderly ladies horrid—the rouge burnt blue on their cheeks, and there was not a curl in the whole community. Masks and character-dresses lay heaped in corners, disregarded; and people, in their own proper persons, were languidly praising the humours and delights of the party, listening, listlessly, for the announcement of the carriages which were to take them away;—the vapour of tea and coffee, which were served, were the only refreshments of the *flétri* scene, if I except the morning air, which some of the most venturous of the girls dared to admit through the open windows, *malgré* the warning of their prudent mothers.

I soon found Daly, and we retired together—my head aching—my heart not easy—tired—worn out—and as much fatigued as if I had travelled a journey of two hundred miles. All the consolation I derived from my own sensa-

tions was, the hope that my friend would be equally knocked up with myself, and would, therefore, delay his departure for Tenby, for at least another day.

END OF VOL I.







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